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Attorneys for Plaintiffs

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

MARHAWIT MELLES and JOHN
RODRIGUES, individually, and on behalf of
all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

HORIZON SERVICES, INCORPORATED, a
California corporation; and DOES 1 through
10, inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 23CV046524

*[Assigned for all purposes to the Hon. S. Raj
Chatterjee, Dept. 21]*

**DECLARATION OF JOHN G. YSLAS IN
SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' MOTION
FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF
CLASS ACTION AND PAGA
SETTLEMENT**

Preliminary Approval Hearing:

Date: November 10, 2026

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Dept.: 21

RES ID: 640998169155

Action Filed: October 4, 2023

DECLARATION OF JOHN G. YSLAS

I, John G. Yslas, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice before all of the courts of the State of California. I am a senior partner at Wilshire Law Firm, PLC (“WLF”), counsel for Plaintiffs Marhawit Melles and John Rodrigues (“Plaintiffs”) in this matter. I am thoroughly familiar with and have personal knowledge of all of the facts set forth herein.

2. I submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs’ Motion for Preliminary Approval of Class Action and PAGA Settlement.

Procedural History

3. On October 4, 2023, Kedo Jacob filed this putative class action against Defendant alleging: (1) failure to pay minimum and straight time wages; (2) failure to pay overtime wages; (3) failure to provide meal periods; (4) failure to authorize and permit rest periods; (5) failure to timely pay final wages at termination; (6) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements; (7) failure to indemnify employees for expenditures; (8) failure to produce requested employment records; and (9) unfair business practices (“Class Action”).

4. On January 11, 2024, Plaintiff Marhawit Melles provided written notice to the LWDA and Defendant of the specific provisions of the Labor Code alleged to have been violated, including the facts and theories in support. A true and correct copy of Plaintiff Marhawit Melles’s letter to Defendant and the LWDA dated January 11, 2024, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**. The LWDA did not notify Plaintiff Melles that it intended to investigate within 65 days of this written notice.

5. On January 17, 2024, Kedo Jacob filed a First Amended Complaint adding Plaintiff Marhawit Melles as a named plaintiff. On February 16, 2024, the Court granted Kedo Jacob’s request to be dismissed from this Class Action without prejudice. On March 15, 2024, Plaintiff Marhawit Melles filed a separate action in the Superior Court of California, County of Alameda, for civil penalties under PAGA, Case No. 24CV068161 (“PAGA Action”). On December 22, 2025, Plaintiff Marhawit Melles filed a Second Amended Complaint in this Class Action which removed Kedo Jacob as a named plaintiff and added a cause of action for civil penalties under PAGA.

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6. On April 8, 2026, Plaintiffs submitted an amended PAGA notice to the LWDA and Defendant. A true and correct copy of Plaintiffs' letter to Defendant and the LWDA dated April 8, 2026, is attached hereto as **Exhibit 2**. On July 20, 2026, Plaintiff Melles filed a Third Amended Complaint in this Class Action adding Plaintiff John Rodrigues as a named plaintiff. On December 26, 2025, the Court granted Plaintiff Marhawit Melles's request for dismissal of the PAGA Action without prejudice.

7. On March 23, 2026, the Parties participated in a private full-day mediation with the Hon. Mitchel R. Goldberg (Ret.). The negotiations were adversarial, conducted at arm's length, and tempered by the efforts of both sides to serve the interests of their clients. The mediator made a proposal, which was accepted by the Parties. The Parties accepted a mediator's proposal in April 2026 and agreed upon general settlement terms.

8. The Parties negotiated the terms of the Settlement over the next several months and fully executed an initial settlement agreement in August 2026. The Parties fully executed the Amended Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement in September 2026. A true and correct copy of the Parties’ fully executed Amended Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement (“Settlement Agreement”) is attached hereto as **Exhibit 3**. Attached thereto as **Exhibit A** is a true and correct copy of the Parties’ proposed Class Notice.

9. On September 30, 2026, Plaintiffs submitted a copy of the Settlement Agreement to the LWDA. A true and correct copy of the confirmation of submission my office received after submitting the Settlement Agreement to the LWDA is attached hereto as **Exhibit 4**.

Investigation and Exposure Analysis

10. To reach this Settlement, Plaintiffs' Counsel thoroughly investigated the claims, applicable law, and potential defenses. Plaintiffs' Counsel assessed the value to the claims data and documents that Defendant produced in informal discovery, including the number of Class Members, the number of workweeks in the Class Period, the number of pay periods in the PAGA Period, the number of Aggrieved Employees, and a random sampling of time and payroll records spanning approximately seven (7) years. Plaintiffs' Counsel engaged an expert consultant to quantify the potential exposure using the time and payroll records, and then assessed the risks

1 associated with each claim meriting reductions in the likely success at class certification and likely
2 recovery at trial.

3 11. Defendant's records show that there are approximately 614 Class Members, making
4 joinder of all Class Members impracticable. Further, given the size and amount of each Class
5 Members' claim, Class Members have little incentive to litigate their claims on an individual basis
6 because the out-of-pocket expenses and personal commitment necessary to litigate each claim likely
7 outweigh any potential recovery.

8 12. Plaintiffs have alleged that Defendant maintained common employment policies
9 and/or practices that unlawfully deprived Class Members of wages, meal period, rest periods,
10 reimbursements for business expenses, accurate wage statements, and timely payment of wages upon
11 separation of employment. These allegations present common factual and legal questions of, *inter*
12 *alia*, whether Defendant applied the same scheduling, timekeeping, pay, meal period, rest period,
13 and reimbursement policies to all Class Members, whether these policies and practices resulted in
14 Labor Code violations, whether Defendant's conduct was intentional, and whether Class Members
15 are entitled to damages and/or penalties. These common questions could be resolved using Class
16 Members' time records, payroll records, testimony from Defendant's designated representative(s),
17 and Class Members' testimony.

18 13. Although the exposure Plaintiffs' Counsel calculated is substantial, the various risks
19 of succeeding at class certification and through trial affected the valuation of the claims for settlement
20 purposes.

21 14. Minimum and Overtime Wages: Plaintiffs' unpaid minimum and overtime wage
22 claims were based on the allegation that Defendant required Class Members to perform work duties
23 while off the clock, without compensation. For example, Plaintiffs alleged that Defendant required
24 Class Members to work without compensation before clocking in at the start of their shifts and
25 after clocking out at the end of their shifts. For purposes of calculating Defendant's liability based
26 on a best-case scenario for Plaintiffs and the Class, Plaintiffs' Counsel assumed that all unpaid
27 worktime should have been paid at the overtime rate of pay and conservatively estimated that
28 Defendant is liable for one (1) hour of unpaid worktime per workweek. This results in potential

1 exposure for this claim of approximately \$1,364,928.57 (36,369 workweeks x \$25.02 average
2 hourly rate of pay x 1 hour/workweek x 1.5 overtime rate). Because this claim would have relied
3 heavily on Class Member testimony and would not be evidenced in Defendant's time and payroll
4 records, the risk of succeeding at class certification and trial was substantial. Accordingly,
5 Plaintiffs' Counsel applied a risk discount based on a 40% chance of succeeding at class
6 certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial on the merits, yielding a realistic damage
7 estimate of approximately \$218,388.57 ($\$1,364,928.57 \times 40\% \times 40\%$).

8 15. Meal Periods: Plaintiffs' meal period claim was based on the allegation that
9 Defendant failed to provide Class Members with legally compliant meal periods or pay meal period
10 premiums in lieu thereof. For example, Plaintiffs alleged that Defendant failed to provide them and
11 other Class Members with uninterrupted duty-free meal periods. Additionally, Plaintiff's
12 Counsel's expert consultant determined there was a 33.7% meal period violation rate (for shifts
13 over 6 hours, where meal periods are not waivable) from the sampling of Defendant's time and
14 payroll records, where meal periods were short, late, or missed. Therefore, potential liability for
15 the meal period claim is approximately \$1,168,757.21 (138,614 shifts over 6 hours x \$25.02
16 average hourly rate x 33.7% violation rate). After taking into account the difficulty of certifying
17 and proving meal period claims, as well as Defendant's contention that the claim lacks merit,
18 Plaintiff's Counsel discounted this figure based on a 50% chance of succeeding at class
19 certification and a 40% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of
20 approximately \$233,751.44 ($\$1,168,757.21 \times 50\% \times 40\%$).

21 16. Rest Periods: Plaintiffs' rest period claim was based on the allegation that Defendant
22 failed to provide Class Members with legally compliant rest periods or pay rest period premiums
23 in lieu thereof. For example, Plaintiffs alleged that Defendant failed to provide them and other
24 Class Members with uninterrupted duty-free rest periods. Based on Plaintiffs' allegations and
25 Plaintiffs' experience working for Defendant, Plaintiffs' Counsel applied a 100% violation rate to
26 all qualifying shifts during the Class Period. Therefore, Defendant's potential liability for the rest
27 period claim is approximately \$3,601,854.18 (143,959 shifts of 3.5 hours or longer x \$25.02
28 average hourly rate x 100% violation rate). However, Plaintiffs' Counsel discounted this figure to

1 account for the difficulty of certifying and proving rest period claims, particularly because rest
2 periods do not have to be recorded, and to account for the possibility of Class Members voluntarily
3 choosing to forego a rest period. Because this claim would have relied exclusively on Class
4 Member testimony, Plaintiffs' Counsel discounted this claim based on a 30% chance of succeeding
5 at class certification and a 20% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate
6 of approximately \$216,111.25 ($\$3,601,854.18 \times 30\% \times 20\%$).

7 17. In sum, Plaintiffs' Counsel estimated that Plaintiffs' maximum recovery for the off-
8 the-clock claim, meal period violations, and rest period violations (i.e., the wage claims) is
9 approximately \$6.1 million. However, after factoring in the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at
10 certification and trial, Plaintiffs' Counsel estimates that Plaintiffs' realistic estimated recovery for
11 these non-penalty wage claims is approximately \$668,251.26.

12 18. Reimbursements: Plaintiffs' reimbursement claim was based on the allegation that
13 Defendant failed to indemnify Class Members for expenses incurred as a direct result of performing
14 their job duties for Defendant, such as mandatory use of personal cell phones for work purposes.
15 For purposes of calculating Defendant's liability based on a best-case scenario for Plaintiffs and
16 the Class, Plaintiffs' Counsel estimated that Defendant was liable to each Class Member for \$7.50
17 per workweek in unreimbursed expenses, for a total amount of approximately \$272,767.50
18 ($\$7.50/\text{workweek} \times 36,369 \text{ workweeks}$). However, Defendant argued that these expenses were not
19 required by Defendant, and that it could not have known that these expenses were being incurred.
20 Accordingly, Plaintiffs' Counsel discounted this claim based on a 30% chance of succeeding at
21 class certification and a 30% chance of succeeding at trial, yielding a realistic damage estimate of
22 approximately \$24,549.08 ($\$272,767.50 \times 30\% \times 30\%$).

23 19. Derivative Penalties: Plaintiffs alleged that as a result of Defendant's failure to pay
24 all wages owed, Defendant owed waiting time penalties and wage statement penalties. With respect
25 to Plaintiffs' derivative claims for statutory penalties, Plaintiffs' Counsel estimated that
26 Defendant's maximum potential liability is approximately \$3,574,497.29. Defendant's maximum
27 potential liability for waiting time penalties is approximately \$2,514,247.29 (411 employees x
28 \$25.02 average hourly rate of pay x 8 hours/day x 30 days] + [411 employees x \$25.02 average

hourly rate of pay x 0.1 hours of overtime/day x 1.5 overtime rate x 30 days]) based on approximately 411 formerly employed Class Members during the 3-year statute of limitations period and an average shift length of 8.1 hours. Defendant's maximum potential liability for inaccurate wage statements is approximately \$1,060,250.00 ([411 employees x 1 initial violation/employee x \$50 for an initial violation] + [(10,808 pay periods - 411 initial violations) x \$100 for each subsequent violation]) based on approximately 411 Class Members who worked during the 1-year statute of limitations period and approximately 10,808 pay periods in that statutory timeframe. In light of the foregoing, Plaintiffs' Counsel believes that it would be unrealistic to expect the Court to award the full \$3,574,497.29 in statutory penalties given Defendant's defenses, the contested nature of Plaintiffs' claims, the challenges of establishing willfulness as applicable, and the discretionary nature of penalties. Considering that the underlying wage claims are realistically estimated to be approximately \$668,251.26, such a disproportionate award would also raise due process concerns. As such, Plaintiffs' counsel discounted these figures to account for the risk and uncertainty of obtaining class certification and prevailing at trial, resulting in a realistic evaluation of approximately \$150,854.84 for waiting time penalty claims (\$2,514,247.29 x 30% x 20%), and approximately \$63,615.00 for wage statement penalty claims (\$1,060,250.00 x 30% x 20%), or approximately \$214,469.84 total for statutory penalties.

20. PAGA: For the PAGA claim, Plaintiffs' Counsel determined that Defendant's potential exposure could reach \$859,000.00, assuming the initial \$100 penalty would apply for each of the 8,590 pay periods in the PAGA Period. However, even assuming success on the merits of each claim, PAGA gives the Court discretion to reduce penalties for a variety of reasons, including where to do otherwise would result in an award that is unjust, arbitrary and oppressive, or confiscatory. As such, Plaintiffs' counsel discounted this figure to account for the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at trial, resulting in a realistic evaluation of approximately \$85,900.00 for PAGA penalties (\$859,000.00 x 10%). The settlement allocates \$50,000.00 of the Gross Settlement Amount to PAGA, therefore the PAGA allocation amounts to 6.9% of the Gross Settlement Amount and approximately 58% of the realistic estimate for PAGA penalties (\$50,000.00 / \$85,900.00).

21. Using these estimated figures, Plaintiff's Counsel predicted that the total realistic damages estimate for all claims, including penalties, would be approximately \$993,170.18. This means that the Gross Settlement Amount represents approximately 73% of the realistic damages estimate (\$729,300.00 / \$993,170.18). Considering the risk and uncertainty of prevailing at class certification and at trial, this is an excellent result for the Class. Indeed, because of the proposed Settlement, Class Members will receive timely, guaranteed relief and will avoid the risk of an unfavorable judgment.

22. Based on the figures in the Settlement Agreement, the Net Settlement Amount available for class settlement payments is currently estimated to be \$384,600.00 for approximately 614 Class Members. As a result, each Settlement Class Member would be eligible to receive an average net benefit of approximately \$626.38. Based on the estimated Net Settlement Amount available for Individual Class Payments and there being approximately 36,369 workweeks in the Class Period, the estimated weekly valuation for Individual Class Payments is \$10.57 (\$384,600.00 / 36,369 workweeks).

Plaintiffs' Counsel's Qualifications

23. Plaintiffs are represented by WLF. The attorneys at WLF performed significant work and expended litigation costs in prosecuting this matter with no guarantee of payment.

24. WLF was selected by Best Lawyers and U.S. News & World Report as one of the nation's Best Law Firms since 2020 and is comprised of more than 100 attorneys and over 600 employees. WLF is actively and continuously practicing in employment litigation, representing employees in both individual and class actions in both state and federal courts throughout California.

25. WLF is qualified to handle this Litigation because its attorneys are experienced in litigating Labor Code violations in individual, class action, and representative action cases. WLF has handled, and is currently handling, numerous wage and hour class action lawsuits, as well as class actions involving consumer rights and data privacy litigation.

26. I graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara with High Honors in 1991 with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Psychology. I received my Juris Doctor from UCLA Law School in 1996.

1 27. Upon graduating from law school in 1996, I worked for a boutique law firm practicing
2 general litigation which included employment law matters. Since 2000 (that is, the last 25 years) my
3 practice has been exclusively focused on labor and employment matters including handling wage
4 and hour class, collective and representative actions (including the California Private Attorneys
5 General Act, or “PAGA”), including in the international law firms of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
6 (where I was a senior associate), Foley & Lardner LLP (where I was a partner and a national Vice
7 Chair of the Labor and Employment Group), Norton Rose Fulbright LLP (where I was a partner) and
8 Seyfarth Shaw LLP (where I was a partner and member of the Wage and Hour Practice Group).
9 During my time at these law firms, I was the primary attorney or took a major leading role in
10 defending employers on numerous wage and hour class, collective and representative actions.

11 28. In late June 2022 I left Seyfarth Shaw LLP and joined my current firm, Wilshire Law
12 Firm, PLC, to represent plaintiff employees. I have been and am handling many wage and hour class
13 and representative actions litigating such matters on behalf of plaintiff employees in numerous
14 Superior Courts and District Courts. From matters representing both plaintiffs and defendants, I have
15 successfully mediated the resolution of many wage and hour class, collective, and representative
16 actions. Just since starting to settle cases in late April 2023 I have already successfully mediated
17 matters in which I have been counsel or co-counsel resulting in **over \$290 million** in settlements and
18 verdicts which are in the process of being finalized, and with numerous upcoming mediations
19 scheduled. In those and numerous other matters, I have managed and assisted with the litigation and
20 settlement of many wage and hour PAGA and class actions. In those actions, I performed similar
21 tasks as those performed in the course of prosecuting this action. Indeed, I recently tried and prevailed
22 in achieving a jury verdict in a certified wage and hour class action in the matter of *Aguilar-Flores*
23 *v. Javier’s – CC LLC*, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 19STCV36438 (settled after
24 verdict).

25 29. I have received numerous awards for my legal work. For example, from 2015 to 2018,
26 I was listed in Los Angeles Super Lawyers for Employment Litigation (Thomson Reuters). I have
27 also served on numerous prominent boards and in other leadership positions, including serving as
28 Southern California Regional President for the Hispanic National Bar Association and on the board

1 of directors of the Mexican American Bar Foundation. I also previously served on the 5-member Los
2 Angeles Civil Service Commission, which generally oversees the personnel decisions for the City of
3 Los Angeles.

4 30. I have also published numerous blogs on labor and employment issues including on
5 wage and hour issues. For example, I published “Headline News: Wal-Mart v. Dukes-Impact on
6 Class Action Litigation” (while a partner with Foley & Lardner LLP) and “Are You Really Protected
7 From Wage-and-Hour Successor Liability in an Asset Purchase” (while a partner with Seyfarth Shaw
8 LLP). I have also been a presenter at numerous conferences, including being a presenter involving
9 the “Employment Law Update” at a National Employment Law Council conference.

10 31. Diego Aviles is a Junior Partner at WLF. Mr. Aviles graduated from the University
11 of California, Irvine, with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science as well as a Bachelor of Arts in
12 Criminology, Law, and Society, and received his Juris Doctor from the Santa Clara University
13 School of Law in 2015. During law school, Mr. Aviles was President for the Santa Clara
14 Employment Law Society, Board Member of the Honors Moot Court, and President of the Santa
15 Clara University La Raza Chapter. He clerked for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
16 in San Francisco, California, and also worked with the Workers’ Rights Clinic in San Jose,
17 California, among other employment law firms. He was admitted to practice law in the State of
18 California in 2017. Since graduating from law school, he has focused his legal work exclusively
19 on employment matters, including wage-and-hour class action and PAGA representative action
20 litigation, and he has helped obtain dozens of settlements on behalf California workers. He has
21 been appointed Class Counsel numerous times in California and most recently achieved a
22 published California Appellate opinion in the matter of *Alberto v. Cambrian Homecare, et al.*, 91
23 Cal.App.5th 482 regarding employment arbitration agreements. He has also been a member of the
24 California Employment Lawyers Association (CELA) since at least 2019.

25 32. Harry Erganyan is an Associate Attorney at WLF. He was admitted to practice law
26 in the State of California in 2021. Mr. Erganyan graduated from Loyola Marymount University,
27 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. He received his Juris Doctor from Southwestern Law
28 School. During law school, he externed for the Los Angeles City Attorney. Since January 2021,

1 Mr. Erganyan's practice has been focused on wage and hour class action litigation.

2 33. Mariam Nazaretyan is an Associate Attorney at WLF. She was admitted to practice
3 law in the State of California in 2021. Ms. Nazaretyan graduated from Loyola Marymount
4 University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. She received her Juris Doctor from
5 Southwestern Law School. During law school, she was a student editor for the Journal of
6 International Media and Entertainment Law and secretary of the Student Bar Association. Since
7 graduating, Ms. Nazaretyan's practice has been focused on international humanitarian law and
8 employment law.

9 34. Courtney M. Miller is a Settlement Attorney at WLF. She was admitted to practice
10 law in the State of California in 2019. Ms. Miller graduated from the University of California,
11 Santa Cruz, with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology. Prior to becoming an attorney, Ms. Miller worked
12 at a boutique civil litigation firm for nearly a decade, primarily handling employment matters. She
13 earned her Juris Doctor from Southwestern Law School in 2019. Ms. Miller has prosecuted wage
14 and hour class and PAGA actions, almost exclusively, since 2020. As a handling attorney, Ms.
15 Miller obtained over \$30 million dollars in settlements on behalf of California employees.

16 **No Conflicts**

17 35. WLF has no actual or potential conflicts of interest with Class Members or the
18 proposed Administrator, Apex Class Action Administration.

19 36. I have no interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, with the proposed Cy Pres
20 Recipient, Legal Aid at Work.

21 **Administrator**

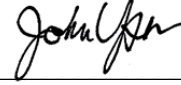
22 37. The Parties selected Apex Class Action Administration to administer this Settlement.
23 Although the Settlement Agreement references Spanish translation of the Class Notice, Defense
24 Counsel has represented to Plaintiff's Counsel that a translation of the Class Notice to any other
25 language is unnecessary. A true and correct copy of the will-not-exceed bid from Apex Class Action
26 Administration to administer this Settlement is attached hereto as **Exhibit 5**.

27 ///

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1 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing
2 is true and correct.

3 Executed on September 30, 2026 at Los Angeles, California.

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6 John G. Yslas
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EXHIBIT 1

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC

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Tae Kim, Esq.	Nathan Kingery, Esq.
Daniel DeSantis, Esq.	Elizabeth Votra, Esq.
Jennifer P. Burkes, Esq.	Benjamin Haber, Esq.
Mary Caruso, Esq.	Ghazaleh Attaran, Esq.
Johnny Ogata, Esq.	Adam Sherman, Esq.
Nicol Hajjar, Esq.	Jesenia Martinez, Esq.
Stephanie Mazepa, Esq.	Arrash Fattahi, Esq.
Brad Stuckey, Esq.	Jesse Chen, Esq.
Thiago Coelho, Esq.	Arsine Grigoryan, Esq.
Cameron Stewart, Esq.	
Shahin Rezvan, Esq.	

January 11, 2024

LWDA
Attn. PAGA Administrator
1515 Clay Street, Ste. 801
Oakland, CA 94612
(Via Online Submission)

Horizon Services, Incorporated
P.O. Box 4217
Hayward, CA 94540
(Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)
#9489 0090 0027 6579 6396 85

Jaime Campos
Agent for Service of Process
Horizon Services, Incorporated
1866 B. St., Ste. 101
Hayward, CA 94541
(Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested)
#9489 0090 0027 6579 6396 92

Re: **Marhawit Melles v. Horizon Services, Incorporated**
Notice of Labor Code Violations and PAGA Penalties

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that my office has been retained by Marhawit Melles (“Ms. Melles” or “Employee”) to pursue a Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 (“PAGA”) representative action (Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2699, *et seq.*) against Employee’s former employers, Horizon Services, Incorporated (“HSI” or “Employers”). The purpose of this letter is to comply with PAGA and set forth the facts and theories of California Labor Code violations which we allege Employers engaged in with respect to Employee and some or potentially all of Employers’ Aggrieved Employees.

Ms. Melles wishes to pursue this action on behalf of Employee as Aggrieved Employees, on behalf of the State of California, as well as on behalf of some or potentially all other persons who worked for HSI in California as a non-exempt or hourly-paid employee at any time within the applicable statutory period (hereafter, the “Aggrieved Employees”).

Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered the Labor Code violations described below.

Ms. Melles’ Employment with HSI

HSI is a residential treatment center for women struggling with substance abuse issues. Employee worked as a case manager. Employee’s primary job function was to coordinate care and appointments for residents. In performing Employee’s duties, Employee was regularly required to

perform work (off-the-clock), without compensation. Due to understaffing and high workloads, Employee was also frequently deprived of an opportunity to take legally compliant meal and rest breaks. Employers failed to provide Employee and other Aggrieved Employees with the meal and rest break premiums they were entitled to under the Labor Code. Additionally, Employee necessarily incurred business-related expenses, but Employers failed to reimburse such business-related expenses. These are just non-exhaustive examples of the facts and theories the Employee asserts, which are described in more detail below.

Employers own/owned and operate/operated an industry, business, and establishment within the State of California. As such and based upon all the facts and circumstances incident to Employers' business in California, Employers are subject to the California Labor Code, Wage Orders issued by the Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC"), and the California Business & Professions Code.

Ms. Melles is a resident of Oakland, California who worked for Employers in Alameda County, California as an hourly-paid, non-exempt employee from approximately October 2016 through approximately January 2023.

During Employee's employment for Employers, Employers paid Employee an hourly wage and classified Employee as non-exempt from overtime. Employers typically scheduled Employee to work at least five days in a workweek and at least eight hours per day, but Employee also worked more than eight hours in a workday and more than forty (40) hours in a workweek.

Throughout Employee's employment, Employers failed to pay for all hours worked (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), failed to provide Employee with legally compliant meal periods, failed to authorize and permit Employee to take rest periods, failed to timely pay all final wages to Employee when Employers terminated Employee's employment, failed to furnish accurate wage statements to Employee, failed to indemnify Employee for business expenditures, and failed to timely produce Employee's requested employment records. As discussed below, Employee's experience working for Employers was typical and illustrative.

Failure to Pay for All Hours Worked, Including Minimum, Straight Time, and Overtime Wages

Under California law, an employer must pay for all hours worked by an employee. "Hours worked" is the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer and includes all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work, whether or not required to do so.

In addition, Labor Code § 510 provides that employees in California shall not be employed more than eight hours in any workday or forty (40) hours in a workweek unless they receive additional compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law.

Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198 also provide that employees in California shall not be employed more than eight hours in any workday unless they receive additional compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law. Additionally, Labor Code § 1198 states that the employment of an employee for longer hours than those fixed by the IWC is unlawful.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers at times failed to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages. Employers at times required Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to work "off-the-clock," uncompensated, by, for example, requiring Employee and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work during uncompensated meal periods and rest periods, and requiring

Employee and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work before clocking in and/or after clocking out. Some of this unpaid work should have been paid at the overtime rate. California Labor Code § 510 requires that employers compensate employees 1.5 times their regular rate of pay when employees work over eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, or when employees work up to eight hours on any seventh day of a workweek. Employers at times failed to properly calculate Employee's regular rate of pay when paying overtime, by failing to include all compensation in Employee's overtime calculations. In failing to pay for all hours worked, Employers also failed to maintain accurate records of the hours Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, worked.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers also engaged, at times, in a practice of improper rounding. Under *Camp v. Home Depot U.S.A., Inc.* (2022) 84 Cal.App.5th 638, because Employers could and did track the exact time in minutes that Employee worked, they must pay for all time worked. When an employer uses an electronic timekeeping system to record time worked, this ability to "precisely capture time worked" means that "the employer must pay the employee for that worktime when due." (*Id.* at 671.) As a result of Employers' rounding policy, Employee consistently was not compensated at least minimum wage for all hours that Employee worked.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210, 1197.1, and 2699(f)(2) for failing to pay for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages.

Failure to Provide Meal Periods

Under California law, employers have an affirmative obligation to relieve employees of all duty in order to take their first 30-minute, duty-free meal periods no later than the start of sixth hour of work in a workday, and to allow employees to take their second 30-minute, duty-free meal period no later than the start of the eleventh hour of work in the workday. Further, employees are entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not provided with all required meal period(s). Despite these legal requirements, Employers at times wrongfully failed to provide Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with their legally mandated 30-minute, uninterrupted, and duty-free meal period in a manner required by law (and also including but not limited to failing at times to provide Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the opportunity to leave the work premises to take meal periods). Employers also continued to assert control over Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by, among other things, requiring, pressuring, or encouraging them to perform work tasks which could not be completed without working in lieu of taking mandatory meal periods, or by denying Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, permission to take a meal period under the conditions required by law, and without properly compensating Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for meal periods that were not provided as required by law. Employers also did not inform Employee of Employee's right to, nor permitted Employee to take, all of Employee's second meal periods when Employee worked at least ten hours of work in a workday and otherwise unlawfully pressured Employee to waive such breaks. Accordingly, Employers at times failed to provide meal periods to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, in compliance with California law.

Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are thus entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not provided with all required meal period(s). Employers, however, at times failed to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the additional wages to which they were entitled for meal periods that were not provided.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to provide meal periods and pay meal period premium wages.

Failure to Authorize and Permit Rest Periods

Employers are required by California law to authorize and permit breaks of ten uninterrupted minutes for each four hours of work or major fraction of four hours (i.e., more than two hours). Thus, for example, if an employee's work time is six hours and ten minutes, the employee is entitled to two rest breaks. Each failure to authorize rest breaks as so required is itself a violation of California's rest break laws.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers at times have wrongfully failed to authorize and permit Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to take legally compliant rest periods in a manner required by law (and also including but not limited to failing, at times, to authorize and permit Plaintiff, the Class, and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the opportunity to leave the work premises to take rest periods). Employers at times required Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to work in excess of four consecutive hours a day without Employers' authorizing and permitting Employee to take a 10-minute, uninterrupted, duty-free rest period for every four hours of work (or major fraction of four hours), or without compensating Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for rest periods that were not authorized or permitted.

Instead, Employers at times continued to assert control over Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by requiring, pressuring, or encouraging them to perform work tasks which could not be completed without working in lieu of taking mandatory rest periods, or at times by denying Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, permission to take a rest period. Accordingly, Employers at times failed to authorize and permit Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to take rest periods in compliance with California law. Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are thus entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday he or she was not authorized and permitted to take all required rest period(s). Employers, however, at times failed to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the additional wages to which they were entitled for rest periods that they were not authorized and permitted to take.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to authorize and permit rest periods and pay rest period premium wages.

Failure to Pay All Earned Wages Twice Per Month

Based on Employers' failure at times to pay Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all wages as discussed above, Employers also violated Labor Code § 204.

Labor Code § 204 requires employers to pay employees all earned wages two times per month. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action, employees were entitled to be paid twice a month at their regular rates, including all meal period premium wages owed, rest period premium wages owed, and wages owed for overtime hours worked. However, at times, Employers failed and refused to pay the Employee all wages due, and failed to pay those wages twice a month, in that Employee was not paid all wages for all meal periods not provided by Employers, all wages for all rest periods not authorized and permitted by Employers, and all

wages for all hours worked. As a result, Employers owe Employee the legally required wages for unpaid wages, and Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered damages in those amounts.

Moreover, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 210 for failing to pay all earned wages twice per month.

Failure to Maintain Accurate Records of Hours Worked and Meal Periods

Employee seeks penalties under California Labor Code § 1174(d). Pursuant to California Labor Code § 1174.5, any person, including any entity, employing labor who willfully fails to maintain accurate and complete records required by California Labor Code § 1174 is subject to a penalty under § 1174.5. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Order § 7(A)(3), every employer shall keep time records showing when the employee begins and ends each work period. Meal periods and total hours worked daily shall also be recorded.

Employers, however, at times failed to maintain accurate records of hours worked and all meal periods taken or missed by Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

Employers' failure to provide and maintain records required by the California Labor Code and the applicable IWC Wage Orders deprived Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the ability to know, understand and question the accuracy and frequency of meal periods, and the accuracy of their hours worked stated in Employers' records. Therefore, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, had no way to dispute the resulting failure to pay wages, all of which resulted in an unjustified economic enrichment to Employers. As a direct result, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, have suffered and continue to suffer, substantial losses related to the use and enjoyment of such wages, lost interest on such wages and expenses and attorneys' fees in seeking to compel Employers to fully perform their obligation under state law, all to their respective damage in amounts according to proof at trial. As a result of Employers' knowing failure, at times, to comply with the California Labor Code and applicable IWC Wage Orders, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, have also suffered an injury in that they were prevented from knowing, understanding, and disputing the wage payments paid to them.

Failure to Timely Pay All Wages at Termination

Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 provide that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately, and that if an employee voluntarily leaves his or her employment, his or her wages shall become due and payable not later than seventy-two (72) hours thereafter, unless the employee has given seventy-two (72) hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting.

Within the applicable statute of limitations, the employment of Employee and many other Aggrieved Employees ended, i.e., was terminated by quitting or being discharged, and the employment of others will be terminated. However, during the relevant time period, Employers at times failed, and continue at times to fail, to pay Employee and terminated Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, without abatement, all wages required to be paid by Labor Code sections 201 and 202 either at the time of discharge, or within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Employers' employment. These unpaid wages include wages for unpaid work time (including

minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), missed meal period premium wages, and missed rest period premium wages.

Employers' conduct violates Labor Code §§ 201 and 202. Labor Code § 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay wages owed, in accordance with sections 201 and 202, then the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty wage from the due date, and at the same rate until paid or until an action is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than thirty (30) days.

Accordingly, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover from Employers their additionally accruing wages for each day they were not paid, at their regular hourly rate of pay, up to thirty (30) days maximum pursuant to Labor Code § 203.

Moreover, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 2699(f)(2) for failing to timely pay all wages at termination.

Failure to Furnish Accurate Itemized Wage Statements

Labor Code § 226(a) provides that every employer shall, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, furnish each of his or her employees an accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing nine pieces of information, including: (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. An employee is presumed to suffer an injury if this information is missing. (Lab. Code § 226(e)(2)(B)(iii).)

The statute further provides: "An employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing and intentional failure by an employer to comply with subdivision (a) is entitled to recover the greater of all actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial pay period in which a violation occurs and one hundred dollars (\$100) per employee for each violation in a subsequent pay period, not to exceed an aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees." (Lab. Code § 226(e)(1).)

Throughout the statutory period, Employers at times failed to, and continue at times to fail, to timely furnish Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with accurate, itemized wage statements showing all applicable hourly rates, and all gross and net wages earned (including correct hours worked, correct wages for meal periods that were not provided in accordance with California law, and correct wages for rest periods that were not authorized and permitted to take in accordance with California law).

Because Employers at times violated Labor Code § 226, Employee and similarly Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered injury and damage to their statutorily protected rights. Accordingly, Employee and similarly Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover from Employers the greater of their actual damages caused by Employers' failure to comply with Labor Code § 226(a), or an aggregate penalty not exceeding four thousand dollars

(\$4,000) per employee. Moreover, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 226.3 for failing to timely furnish accurate itemized wage statements.

Failure to Indemnify for Necessary Expenditures

Labor Code § 2802(a) provides that employers shall indemnify their employees for all necessary business expenditures or losses that have been incurred by the employees in direct discharge of his or her duties. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action, Employers at times wrongfully required Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to pay expenses that they incurred in direct discharge of their duties for Employers. Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, at times paid out-of-pocket for necessary employment-related expenses. Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, incurred substantial expenses as a direct result of performing their job duties for Employers, but Employers failed to indemnify Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for these employment-related expenses.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 2802 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to indemnify Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for necessary business expenditures.

Failure to Produce Requested Employment Records

Labor Code § 226 provides that current and former employees have the right to inspect or receive a copy of their records pertaining to their employment, upon reasonable request to their employer. Under this statute, an employer that receives a request to inspect or receive a copy of records pertaining to a current or former employee must comply with the request as soon as practicable, but no later than twenty-one (21) calendar days from the date of the request.

Labor Code § 1198.5(a) also provides that every current and former employee, or his or her representative, has the right to inspect and receive a copy of the personnel records that the employer maintains relating to the employees' performance or to any grievance concerning the employee. Under this statute, upon written request from a current or former employee or his or her representative, an employer must make the contents of those personnel records available for inspection or provide a copy of the personnel records to the current or former employee, or his or her representative, not later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date the employer receives the written request, subject to some limited exceptions. Labor Code § 432 provides that if an employee or applicant signs any instrument relating to the obtaining or holding of employment, he or she shall be given a copy of the instrument upon request. On information and belief, Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, submitted written request(s) to Employers for their payroll records, timecards, and personnel records but did not timely receive them as required by the Labor Code.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 226(f), 1198.5(k), and 2699 for failing to timely produce the requested records.

Recordkeeping Requirement Violations

California Labor Code section 1174 requires employers to keep "accurate and complete" payroll records showing, among other things, the hours worked daily by Employees and Aggrieved

Employees. All applicable IWC Wage Orders, section 7 similarly requires employers to keep accurate time records reflecting the times during which all owed meal periods were provided each day.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed, and continue at times to fail, to keep accurate and complete payroll records as required by law, including but not limited to the following records: total daily hours worked, applicable rates of pay, time records showing when Employee and other Aggrieved Employees began and ended each work period, time records of meal periods, and accurate itemized wage statements.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed and continue at times to fail to keep accurate and complete records showing total hours worked by Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by virtue of Employers' time rounding and/or auto deduction policies and practices and/or other off-the-clock work policies and practices.

Employers failed at times and continue at times to fail to keep accurate and complete records showing total hours worked by virtue of Employers' failure to relieve Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, of all duties and Employers' control for unpaid meal periods, resulting in unpaid hours worked.

Based on information and belief, Employers further failed at times, and continue at times to fail, to record the true start and end times of Employee's and Aggrieved Employees' meal periods, or some of them.

Based on further information and belief, Employers further failed at times and continue at times to fail, to record the true start and end times of Employee's and Aggrieved Employees' work shifts, or some of them.

Additionally, Employers at times failed, and continue at times to fail, to keep accurate records and issue accurate wage statements by not documenting accrued sick time for Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them. Employers' failure to keep "accurate and complete" payroll records for Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, violates Labor Code sections 1174, 1198, 1199, and all applicable IWC Wage Orders, section 7. These violations subject Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code sections 558.1, 226.6, 1174.5 and 2699. Each violation of each Labor Code section and Wage Order provision, for each Aggrieved Employee (or some of them), results in a separate civil penalty.¹

Violation of Wage Theft Protection Act of 2011

Based on information and belief, Employers failed at times, and continue at times to fail, to comply with the notice requirements of Labor Code section 2810.5 (*i.e.*, the Wage Theft Protection Act of 2011) by, among other things, failing to provide Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with the rates of pay and overtime rates of pay applicable to their employment, allowances claimed as part of the minimum wage, the regular payday designated by Employers, the name of the employer, including any "doing business as" names used, the name, address and telephone number of the workers' compensation insurance carrier, information regarding paid sick leave, and other pertinent information required to be disclosed by Employers under Labor Code section

¹ See Lab. Code §2699(f)(2) (establishing that the civil penalty is "for each aggrieved employee per pay period").

2810.5. Employee is informed and believes that failure to provide such information, including rates of pay that are in effect, has permitted Employers to pay Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, at rates of pay that were not agreed upon and violate minimum wage and overtime wage laws in California. Employee is additionally informed and believes that the notice requirement of Labor Code section 2810.5 involves a mandatory payroll or workplace injury reporting. Among other relief, Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, may collect from Employers in connection with these violations' civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Violation of California Labor Code §§ 245-248.5

Throughout the relevant time period, Employers at times failed to provide proper paid sick leave to Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them. Employers either failed at times to provide paid sick leave at all or improperly calculated the sick leave accrual and the sick leave rate of pay owed to Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by failing at times to base the accrued sick leave hours on the correct number of hours worked (as a result of the rounding/automatic deduction policies and practices for meal periods and/or shift start and end times/other required off-the-clock work including but not limited to unpaid meal periods that were restricted to Employers' premises) and by failing at times to incorporate multiple rates of pay and/or all non-discretionary remuneration, including but not limited to, non-discretionary bonuses, shift differential pay and/or other non-discretionary compensation into the sick leave pay rate calculation.

Based on information and belief, Employers further failed at times to provide notice of the correct sick leave amount balance available to Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, on their wage statements or other written statement.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed to put Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, on notice of their paid sick leave rights, thereby failing at times to put their entitlement to sick leave in a Labor Code section 2810.5 notice. In addition, Employers at times failed to maintain accurate records of used sick leave and the balance of paid sick leave left to the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed to provide notice of sick leave amount balance left for Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, thus affecting their intelligent exercise of their paid sick leave. But for this failure, Employee, and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, would have used their paid sick leave at least prior to their respective separations, for as on several occasions thereafter, he or she would have been entitled to use the banked sick leave and earn appropriate compensation.

This illegal retention of paid sick leave is unlawful, and Employee seeks all forms of injunctive relief, restitution, and declaratory relief as permitted by California law, on behalf of Employee and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

In violation of Labor Code section 247.5, Employers at times failed to maintain records documenting the hours worked and paid sick days accrued and used by Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, permitting the presumption that Employee and these Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, were entitled to the maximum number of hours accruable under this article.

Upon information and belief, Employers at times further failed and continue at times to fail to comply with Labor Code section 246, by failing to provide Employee and Aggrieved Employees,

or some of them, with a Labor Code section 226 wage statement, or separate writing containing the amount of paid sick leave available, or paid time off leave an employer provides in lieu of sick leave, at the time it pays wages.

Employers at times unlawfully retained and continue at times to retain paid sick leave that should have been paid but was not, as a result of Employers' failure, at times, to properly institute a paid sick leave program.

On information and belief, Employee alleges that these practices at times were experienced and continue to be experienced at times by other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

Employee requests all appropriate relief under the PAGA and these statutes, including but not limited to the restitution of earned paid sick leave that could have been used, but was not due to Employers' sole failure to institute such a paid sick leave entitlement or paid sick leave bank as required by California law.

Accordingly, Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to injunctive relief, attorneys' fees, declaratory relief, restitution, and penalties as permitted by law. Employee requests all relief pursuant to the aforementioned code provisions, including but not limited to Labor Code sections 233 and 234, which incorporates the paid sick leave requirements.

Failure To Provide Supplemental Paid Sick Leave

Labor Code section 248.2 provides that all employers with 26 or more employees are required to provide up to 80 hours for covered employees to take 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave to care for themselves, to care for a family member or if it is vaccine-related. Based on information and belief, Employers at times violated Labor Code section 248.2 by not providing Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with required 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave.

Refusal to Make Payment

Labor Code section 216 declares unlawful an employer's refusal to pay wages due and payable and/or denial of the validity of any claim to wages due. Employers at times violated and continue at times to violate Labor Code section 216 by failing to pay Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all hours worked at the proper wage rate and by failing to pay Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, an additional hour of pay for each meal and/or rest period not provided or that was invalid. *Gould v. Maryland Sound Industries, Inc.* (1995) 31 Cal.App.4th 1137, 1154-1155.

These violations subject Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code section 225.5. Each violation results in a *separate* civil penalty, for each Aggrieved Employee (or some of them) so affected, for each pay period (or some of them) during which the statute's provisions were violated.²

² Labor Code § 225.5 (establishing that "[i]n addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in this article, every person who unlawfully withholds wages due any employee in violation of sections 212, 216, 221, 222, or 223 shall be subject to a civil penalty...for each failure to pay each employee") (emphasis added).

Seating Violations

Per section 14(A-B) of all applicable IWC Wage Orders, employees shall be provided with suitable seats when the nature of the work reasonably permits the use of seats and when they are not actively engaged in the work duties that would not permit them to be seated.

All applicable IWC Wage Orders, Section 14(A-B) provides:

(A) All working employees shall be provided with suitable seats when the nature of the work reasonably permits the use of seats.

(B) When employees are not engaged in the active duties of their employment and the nature of the work requires standing, an adequate number of suitable seats shall be placed in reasonable proximity to the work area and employees shall be permitted to use such seats when it does not interfere with the performance of their duties.

Suitable seating is one of the worker protections covered by California's Wage Orders, which have the same dignity as statutes, are remedial in nature and are to be broadly construed to effectuate the goal of protecting the comfort and welfare of employees. *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1027 (2012).

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed to provide Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with suitable seating, and when such employees, or some of them, were not engaged in duties which required them to stand, at times no seating was placed in reasonable proximity to their workstations.

Moreover, based on information and belief, the nature of the work reasonably permitted the use of seats for at least part of the time that Aggrieved Employees were working. Lastly, based on information and belief, Aggrieved Employees at times were not engaged in active duties of their employment, yet at times there were no suitable seats in reasonable proximity to the work area, and use of seats would not have interfered with the performance of their duties.

Employers' Aggrieved Employees worked in various positions. The nature of Employee's and other Aggrieved Employees' work, or some of them, reasonably permitted the use of seats. However, Employers at times failed to provide suitable seating in reasonable proximity to Aggrieved Employees' work areas, or some of them, in violation of section 14(A-B) of applicable Wage Orders, and Labor Code sections 1198 and 1199, subjecting Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code sections 1199 and 2699. Each violation of each Labor Code section and IWC Wage Order provision, for each Aggrieved Employee, or some of them, results in a separate civil penalty.³

Statutory Wage Violations

Labor Code section 223 makes it unlawful for an employer to secretly pay wages lower than required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages.

³ See Lab. Code §2699(f)(2) (establishing that the civil penalty is "for each aggrieved employee per pay period").

As described above, Employers at times willfully and systematically denied Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, of minimum and overtime wage compensation for all hours worked which resulted in the payment of less than statutorily required wages owed to them. Employers at times acted with the intent to deprive some or all of them of statutory wages, including, but not limited to, overtime wages and minimum wages, to which they were entitled to under California law.

Thus, Employers at times paid Employee and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, lower wages than those to which they were entitled, while purporting that Employee and all Aggrieved Employees were properly paid. As such, Employee and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover penalties, attorneys' fees, costs, and interest thereon, pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(f)-(g).

Failure to Pay Vested Vacation/Paid Time Off

California Labor Code section 227.3 provides that when an employer policy provides for paid vacations and/or paid time off, and an employee is terminated without having taken off his, her, or their vested vacation time, all vested vacation shall be paid to the employee as wages at the employee's final rate in accordance with such contract of employment or employer policy respecting eligibility or time served and that there shall be no forfeiture of vested vacation time or paid time off upon termination. Based on information and belief, Employers at times had and continue at times to have a policy and/or practice of failing to allow Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to use their earned vacation/paid time off during their employment and failing at times to pay all vested, accrued paid time off to Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, and/or Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, upon separation of employment, in violation of California law, including but not limited to, Labor Code section 227.3.

Failure to Timely Provide Temporary Workers with Owed Wages

On information and belief, Employers at times had and have failed to provide temporary workers, or some of them, with owed wages weekly by not later than the regular payday of the following week. As a result, pursuant to Labor Code section 201.3, Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 201.3.

Unlawful Agreements/ Unlawful Criminal History Inquiries

Unlawful Agreements

Labor Code section 432.5 provides that "no employer ... shall require any employee or applicant for employment to agree, in writing, to any term or condition which is known by such employer ... to be prohibited by law." Based on information and belief, Employers at times required Employee, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to unlawful conditions of employment including but not limited to unlawful non-compete and/or non-solicitation agreements as well as unlawful criminal and/or financial checks as a condition of obtaining and/or continuing employment in violation of Labor Code section 432.5.

The California Labor Code places certain procedural and substantive limits on employers' ability to conduct employee background checks and on how employers can use the information they obtain through those background checks. Labor Code section 1024.5 states that employers, except for financial institutions, may order a credit check only if the individual works (or is applying to

work) in certain positions (e.g., managerial positions, financially related positions, and certain government positions). Additionally, the Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act (ICRAA - CA Civil Code section 1786, *et seq.*) and the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA - 15 U.S.C. section 1681, *et seq.*) mandate several requirements prior to and following an employee background check, including but not limited to identifying an appropriate reason for the background check, a separate consent form with required disclosures and certain formatting requirements, additional forms such as a summary of rights, a way by which to request a copy of the report, as well as proper notice of adverse actions taken, among other statutory requirements.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times ordered unlawful financial credit checks on Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, in violation of Labor Code section 1024.5, and at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to provide ongoing written consent to the unlawful credit checks as a condition of employment, in violation of California and Federal law, which results in a further violation of Labor Code section 432.5.

Based on information and belief, Employers also at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to submit and/or agree to submit in writing to unlawful criminal background checks as a condition of obtaining and/or holding employment in violation of the ICRAA and the FCRA. For example, based on information and belief, Employers required Employee to submit and/or agree to submit in writing to an unlawful background check as a condition of obtaining and/or holding employment in violation of, including but not limited to, Labor Code section 432.5.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to a background check which failed to abide by the requirements set forth in California Civil Code section 1786, *et seq.* and 15 U.S.C. section 1681, *et seq.*, including but not limited to by failing, at times, to provide a clear and conspicuous disclosure (and/or failing to provide any disclosure at all), failing at times to provide disclosures free of extraneous information, failing at times to provide a lawful purpose for the background check, failing at times to provide a summary of rights under the ICRAA and/or the FCRA, failing at times to provide a way by which the individual could request a copy of the report, failing at times to disclose the name, address, and telephone number of the third party preparing the report, and failing at times to properly obtain authorization or consent to such a background check, and thus was an unlawful background check.

By at times requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to unlawful criminal and/or financial checks not in conformance with the applicable laws, Employers violated Labor Code section 432.5.

Based on information and belief, Employers also at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to provide ongoing consent to Employers to conduct background checks throughout the duration of employment, in violation of the ICRAA and/or FCRA and/or other applicable laws, resulting in a further violation of Labor Code section 432.5, by at times requiring applicants and employees, or some of them, to agree to an unlawful provision as a condition of employment.

Based on further information and belief, Employers knew that requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree at times to unlawful criminal and/or financial background checks as a condition of obtaining and/or holding employment was unlawful.

By requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree at times in writing to unlawful provisions as a condition of employment, Employers violated Labor Code section 432.5.

Unlawful Inquires into Criminal History

Labor Code section 432.7 prohibits an employer from asking applicants about past arrest(s) unless they resulted in conviction(s) and even then, certain limitations apply. Based on information and belief, Employers at times asked Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, about arrests not resulting in convictions on their employment application, in violation of California law.

Upon information and belief, Employers, in violation of California law, including but not limited to the Fair Chance Act/the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (“FEHA”), at times asked Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, about convictions prior to extending an offer of employment and/or otherwise impermissibly inquired into criminal history on their employment application in violation of California law.

By asking, at times, about arrests not resulting in convictions, Employers violated Labor Code section 432.7. By asking, at times, about convictions at the application phase or prior to extending an employment offer, Employers violated California’s Fair Chance Act, and thereby violated Labor Code section 432.5 by unlawfully requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to disclose arrests and/or convictions as a condition of employment.

Unlawful PAGA Waiver

Additionally, Employers at times violated Labor Code section 432.5 by requiring Employee, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to other unlawful agreements, including but not limited to an unlawful waiver of PAGA and or representative actions, as a condition of employment.

An action pursuant to PAGA “...is a representative action on behalf of the state” *Kim v Reins Int’l California, Inc.*, (2020) 9 Cal. 5th 73, 86-87. It is well settled that agreements purporting to waive an employee’s right to a trial of PAGA claims is contrary to California law and unenforceable. *See Iskanian v CLS Transportation Los Angeles, LLC* (2014) 59 Cal. 4th 348, 384 (“We conclude that where, as here, an employment agreement compels the waiver of representative claims under the PAGA, it is contrary to public policy and unenforceable as a matter of state law.”).

Moreover, the California Supreme Court has ruled that a court cannot compel arbitration of an aggrieved employee’s individual PAGA claim because there is no such thing as an individual PAGA claim. *Kim v Reins Int’l California, Inc.*, (2020) 9 Cal. 5th 73, 86-87 (“There is no individual component to a PAGA action because ‘every PAGA action ... is a representative action on behalf of the state.’”).

Upon information and belief, Employers at times required Employee, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to waive their right to a trial of PAGA claims in violation of California law. By at times requiring Employee, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree, in writing, to an unlawful PAGA waiver, Employers at times required written agreement to an unlawful provision as a condition of employment, which is a violation of labor code section 432.5.

As such, Employee, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, continue to be subject at times to various unlawful provisions as a condition of employment.

Preventing Employees from Using or Disclosing Skills, Knowledge, and Experience

On information and belief, Employers at times have prevented Employee and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge, and experience they obtained at Employers for purposes of competing with Employers, including, without limitation, preventing Employees, or some of them, from disclosing their wages in negotiating a new job with a prospective employer, and from disclosing who else works at Employers and under what circumstances they might be receptive to an offer from a rival employer. As such, Employee is informed and believes, this violates Business and Professions Code sections 17200, 16600 and 16700 and, by virtue thereof, various provisions of the Labor Code, including Labor Code sections 232, 232.5, and 1197.5, subdivision (k). Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Whistleblower Violations

On information and belief, Employers at times have prevented Employee and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, from disclosing violations of state and federal law, either within Employers to their managers or outside Employers to private attorneys or government officials, among others, in violation of Business and Professions Code section 17200, and thus in violation of Labor Code section 1102.5. In addition, Employee is informed and believes that these policies and/or practices at times prevent Employee and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, from disclosing information about unsafe or discriminatory working conditions, or about wage and hour violations in violation of Labor Code sections 98.6, 232, and 232.5. These violations of the Labor Code would expose Employers to liability for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Workplace Health and Safety Violations

On information and belief, Employers at times have failed to furnish and use safety devices and safeguards, and adopt and use practices, means, methods, operations and processes which are reasonably adequate to render such employment and place of employment safe and healthful, pursuant to, including but not limited to, Labor Code section 6401. Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers at times have required or permitted employees, or some of them, to go or be in any employment or place of employment which is not safe and healthful, pursuant to Labor Code section 6402. Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that Employers at times have failed or neglected to provide and use safety devices and safeguards reasonably adequate to render the employment and place of employment safe; adopt and use methods and processes reasonably adequate to render the employment and place of employment safe; and do every other thing reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety, and health of employees, pursuant to Labor Code section 6403. Employee is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that these failures include, without limitation, at times failing to disinfect time clocks and other surfaces after use by Employee and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them; at times failing to provide adequate protection equipment to Employee and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them; and at times failing to provide adequate distance in working conditions between Employee and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

On information and belief, Employers violated section 1527, 3366, 3457 and 8397.4 by failing at times to provide adequate and readily accessible sanitation facilities; a regular schedule for

servicing, cleaning, and supplying each facility to ensure it is maintained in a clean, sanitary and serviceable condition; an adequate supply of suitable cleansing agents, water, single-use towels or blowers; and a sufficient number of toilets to be used by each sex of employee.

Action for Civil Penalties Under PAGA

In light of the above, Employee alleges that Employers at times violated the following provisions of the Labor Code with respect to the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them:

1. Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, 1197, and 1198 by failing at times to pay for all hours worked, including minimum wages, straight time wages, and overtime wages;
2. Labor Code § 226.7 and applicable Wage Orders by failing at times to provide meal periods;
3. Labor Code § 226.7 and applicable Wage Orders by failing at times to authorize and permit rest periods;
4. Labor Code § 204 by failing at times to pay all earned wages two times per month;
5. California Labor Code § 1174.5 and applicable Wage Orders by failing at times to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods taken or missed;
6. Labor Code §§ 201 to 203 by willfully failing at times to pay all wages owed at termination;
7. Labor Code § 226 by failing at times to provide accurate itemized wage statements;
8. Labor Code § 2802 by failing at times to indemnify for necessary expenditures;
9. Labor Code §§ 226, 432, and 1198.5 by failing at times to timely produce requested payroll records, timecards, and personnel records;
10. Labor Code § 1174 by failing at times to keep accurate and complete payroll records;
11. Labor Code §§ 245-248.5 by failing at times to provide proper sick leave and supplemental paid sick leave;
12. Labor Code § 216 for refusal at times to pay wages due and payable and/or denial at times of the validity of any claim to wages due;
13. Labor Code § 223 for at times secretly paying wages lower than required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages;
14. Labor Code § 227.3 for failure at times to pay vested vacation and/or paid time off;
15. Section 14(A-B) of all applicable IWC Wage Orders for failure at times to provide suitable seating;
16. Labor Code § 432.5 for unlawful agreements;
17. Labor Code § 201.3 for failure at times to timely provide temporary workers, or some of them, with wages;
18. Labor Code §§ 98.6, 232, 232.5, 1102.5, and 1197.5 for at times preventing employees, or some of them, from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge and experience they obtained at Employers, and whistleblower violations;
19. Labor Code § 432.7 for unlawful inquiries at times into criminal histories; and

LWDA

Notice of Labor Code Violations and PAGA

January 11, 2024

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20. Labor Code §§ 1527, 3366, 3457, 8397.4, 6401, and 6401 for workplace health and safety violations.

Therefore, on behalf of potentially Aggrieved Employees, Employee seeks applicable penalties related to the violations alleged above pursuant to the PAGA. These include, but are not limited to, penalties under Labor Code §§ 210, 226.3, 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699.

Employee has placed Employers on notice by mailing a certified copy of this correspondence, as indicated on the first page. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Yslas", is written over the printed name.

John G. Yslas, Esq.

EXHIBIT 2

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM, PLC

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April 8, 2026

LWDA
Attn. PAGA Administrator
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(Via Online Submission)

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(Via Email)

Re: ***Marhawit Melles, et al. v. Horizon Services, Incorporated***
Amended Notice of Labor Code Violations and PAGA Penalties
LWDA Case No.: LWDA-CM-1004504-24

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that my office has been retained by Marhawit Melles and John Rodrigues ("Employees") to pursue a Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004 ("PAGA") representative action (Cal. Lab. Code §§ 2699, *et seq.*) against Employees' former employers, Horizon Services, Incorporated ("HSI" or "Employers"). The purpose of this letter is to comply with PAGA and set forth the facts and theories of California Labor Code violations which we allege Employers engaged in with respect to Employees and some or potentially all of Employers' Aggrieved Employees.

This letter amends Marhawit Melles' LWDA notice letter sent on January 11, 2024 (LWDA-CM-100450-24), including but not limited to by adding Employee John Rodrigues.

Employees wish to pursue this action on behalf of Employees as Aggrieved Employees, on behalf of the State of California, as well as on behalf of some or potentially all other persons who worked for HSI in California as a non-exempt or hourly-paid employee at any time within the applicable statutory period (hereafter, the "Aggrieved Employees").

Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered the Labor Code violations described below.

Employees' Employment with HSI

HSI is a residential treatment center for women struggling with substance abuse issues. Employees worked as a Case Manager and a Recovery Specialist 2. Employees' primary job functions were to coordinate care and appointments for incoming intoxicated patients and residents. In performing Employees' duties, Employees were regularly required to perform work (off-the-clock), without compensation, including, but not limited to, continuing to perform work duties in lieu of taking compliant meal and rest periods. Employees were also frequently deprived of an opportunity to

take legally compliant meal and rest breaks. Specifically, Employees regularly and consistently had late, short, and interrupted meal breaks, and Employees have no recollection of receiving meal and rest break premiums as required by the Labor Code. Additionally, Employees necessarily incurred business-related expenses, including, but not limited to, the use of Employees' personal cell phones for work related purposes, but Employers failed to reimburse such business-related expenses. These are just non-exhaustive examples of the facts and theories the Employees assert, which are described in more detail below.

Employers own/owned and operate/operated an industry, business, and establishment within the State of California. As such and based upon all the facts and circumstances incident to Employers' business in California, Employers are subject to the California Labor Code, Wage Orders issued by the Industrial Welfare Commission ("IWC"), and the California Business & Professions Code.

Marhawit Melles is a resident of California who worked for Employers in California as an hourly-paid, non-exempt employee from approximately October 2016 through approximately January 2023.

John Rodrigues is a resident of California who worked for Employers in California as an hourly-paid, non-exempt employee from approximately July 2024 through approximately January 2026.

During Employees' employment for Employers, Employers paid Employees an hourly wage and classified Employees as non-exempt from overtime. Employers typically scheduled Employees to work, on average, at least five days in a workweek and at least eight hours per day, but Employees also worked more than eight hours in a workday and more than forty (40) hours in a workweek.

Throughout Employees' employment, Employers failed to pay for all hours worked (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), failed to provide Employees with legally compliant meal periods, failed to authorize and permit Employees to take rest periods, failed to timely pay all final wages to Employees when Employers terminated Employees' employment, failed to furnish accurate wage statements to Employees, failed to indemnify Employees for business expenditures, and failed to timely produce Employees' requested employment records. As discussed below, Employees' experience working for Employers was typical and illustrative.

Failure to Pay for All Hours Worked, Including Minimum, Straight Time, and Overtime Wages

Under California law, an employer must pay for all hours worked by an employee. "Hours worked" is the time during which an employee is subject to the control of an employer and includes all the time the employee is suffered or permitted to work, whether or not required to do so. In addition, Labor Code § 510 provides that employees in California shall not be employed more than eight hours in any workday or forty (40) hours in a workweek unless they receive additional compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law.

Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198 also provide that employees in California shall not be employed more than eight hours in any workday unless they receive additional compensation beyond their regular wages in amounts specified by law. Additionally, Labor Code § 1198 states that the employment of an employee for longer hours than those fixed by the IWC is unlawful.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers at times failed to pay Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages. Employers at times required Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them,

to work “off-the-clock,” uncompensated, by, for example, requiring Employees and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work during uncompensated meal periods and rest periods, and requiring Employees and the Aggrieved Employees to perform work before clocking in and/or after clocking out. For example, Employees oftentimes were expected and required to assist clients at the clinic, regardless if Employees were on their meal breaks or had clocked out for day. As another example, Employees often communicated with management on their personal cellphone off-the-clock.

Some of this unpaid work should have been paid at the overtime rate. California Labor Code § 510 requires that employers compensate employees 1.5 times their regular rate of pay when employees work over eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, or when employees work up to eight hours on any seventh day of a workweek. Employers at times failed to properly calculate Employees’ regular rate of pay when paying overtime, by failing to include all compensation in Employees’ overtime calculations, including hours worked off-the-clock. In failing to pay for all hours worked, Employers also failed to maintain accurate records of the hours Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, worked.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers also engaged, at times, in a practice of improper rounding. Under *Camp v. Home Depot U.S.A., Inc.* (2022) 84 Cal.App.5th 638, because Employers could and did track the exact time in minutes that Employees worked, they must pay for all time worked. When an employer uses an electronic timekeeping system to record time worked, this ability to “precisely capture time worked” means that “the employer must pay the employee for that worktime when due.” (*Id.* at 671.) As a result of Employers’ rounding policy, Employees consistently were not compensated at least minimum wage for all hours that Employees worked.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210, 1197.1, and 2699(f)(2) for failing to pay for all hours worked, including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages.

Failure to Provide Meal Periods

Under California law, employers have an affirmative obligation to relieve employees of all duty in order to take their first 30-minute, duty-free meal periods no later than the start of sixth hour of work in a workday, and to allow employees to take their second 30-minute, duty-free meal period no later than the start of the eleventh hour of work in the workday. Further, employees are entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not provided with all required meal period(s). Despite these legal requirements, Employers at times wrongfully failed to provide Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with their legally mandated 30-minute, uninterrupted, and duty-free meal period in a manner required by law (and also including but not limited to failing at times to provide Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the opportunity to leave the work premises to take meal periods). For example, Employees routinely experienced missed, late, and interrupted meal periods due to the busy nature of the work environment. Indeed, Employers expected and required its employees to attend to management and clients’ needs, in lieu of taking a compliant meal period.

Employers also continued to assert control over Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by, among other things, requiring, pressuring, or encouraging them to perform work tasks which could not be completed without working in lieu of taking mandatory meal periods, or by denying Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, permission to take a meal period under the conditions required by law, and without properly compensating Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for meal periods that were not provided as required by law. Employers also did not inform Employees of Employees’ right to, nor permitted

Employees to take, all of Employees' second meal periods when Employees worked at least ten hours of work in a workday and otherwise unlawfully pressured Employees to waive such breaks. Accordingly, Employers at times failed to provide meal periods to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, in compliance with California law.

Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are thus entitled to be paid one hour of additional wages for each workday they were not provided with all required meal period(s). Employers, however, at times failed to pay Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the additional wages to which they were entitled for meal periods that were not provided. Employees do not recall receiving meal and rest break premiums.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to provide meal periods and pay meal period premium wages.

Failure to Authorize and Permit Rest Periods

Employers are required by California law to authorize and permit breaks of ten uninterrupted minutes for each four hours of work or major fraction of four hours (i.e., more than two hours). Thus, for example, if an employee's work time is six hours and ten minutes, the employee is entitled to two rest breaks. Each failure to authorize rest breaks as so required is itself a violation of California's rest break laws.

Throughout the statutory period, Employers at times have wrongfully failed to authorize and permit Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to take legally compliant rest periods in a manner required by law (and also including but not limited to failing, at times, to authorize and permit Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the opportunity to leave the work premises to take rest periods). Employers at times required Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to work in excess of four consecutive hours a day without Employers' authorizing and permitting Employees to take a 10-minute, uninterrupted, duty-free rest period for every four hours of work (or major fraction of four hours), or without compensating Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for rest periods that were not authorized or permitted.

Instead, Employers at times continued to assert control over Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by requiring, pressuring, or encouraging them to perform work tasks which could not be completed without working in lieu of taking mandatory rest periods, or at times by denying Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, permission to take a rest period. For example, at times, it was impossible for Employees and Aggrieved Employees to take rest breaks due to their high workload and performance demands.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 210 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to authorize and permit rest periods and pay rest period premium wages.

Failure to Pay All Earned Wages Twice Per Month

Based on Employers' failure at times to pay Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all wages as discussed above, Employers also violated Labor Code § 204. Labor Code § 204 requires employers to pay employees all earned wages two times per month. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action, employees were entitled to be paid

twice a month at their regular rates, including all meal period premium wages owed, rest period premium wages owed, and wages owed for overtime hours worked. However, at times, Employers failed and refused to pay the Employees all wages due, and failed to pay those wages twice a month, in that Employees were not paid all wages for all meal periods not provided by Employers, all wages for all rest periods not authorized and permitted by Employers, and all wages for all hours worked. As a result, Employers owe Employees the legally required wages for unpaid wages, and Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered damages in those amounts.

Moreover, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 210 for failing to pay all earned wages twice per month.

Failure to Maintain Accurate Records of Hours Worked and Meal Periods

Employees seek penalties under California Labor Code § 1174(d). Pursuant to California Labor Code § 1174.5, any person, including any entity, employing labor who willfully fails to maintain accurate and complete records required by California Labor Code § 1174 is subject to a penalty under § 1174.5. Pursuant to the applicable IWC Order § 7(A)(3), every employer shall keep time records showing when the employee begins and ends each work period. Meal periods and total hours worked daily shall also be recorded. Employers, however, at times failed to maintain accurate records of hours worked and all meal periods taken or missed by Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

Employers' failure to provide and maintain records required by the California Labor Code and the applicable IWC Wage Orders deprived Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, the ability to know, understand and question the accuracy and frequency of meal periods, and the accuracy of their hours worked stated in Employers' records. Therefore, Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, had no way to dispute the resulting failure to pay wages, all of which resulted in an unjustified economic enrichment to Employers. As a direct result, Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, have suffered and continue to suffer, substantial losses related to the use and enjoyment of such wages, lost interest on such wages and expenses and attorneys' fees in seeking to compel Employers to fully perform their obligation under state law, all to their respective damage in amounts according to proof at trial.

As a result of Employers' knowing failure, at times, to comply with the California Labor Code and applicable IWC Wage Orders, Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, have also suffered an injury in that they were prevented from knowing, understanding, and disputing the wage payments paid to them.

Failure to Timely Pay All Wages at Termination

Labor Code §§ 201 and 202 provide that if an employer discharges an employee, the wages earned and unpaid at the time of discharge are due and payable immediately, and that if an employee voluntarily leaves his or her employment, his or her wages shall become due and payable not later than seventy-two (72) hours thereafter, unless the employee has given seventy-two (72) hours previous notice of his or her intention to quit, in which case the employee is entitled to his or her wages at the time of quitting.

Within the applicable statute of limitations, the employment of Employees and many other Aggrieved Employees ended, i.e., was terminated by quitting or being discharged, and the

employment of others will be terminated. However, during the relevant time period, Employers at times failed, and continue at times to fail, to pay Employees and terminated Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, without abatement, all wages required to be paid by Labor Code sections 201 and 202 either at the time of discharge, or within seventy-two (72) hours of their leaving Employers' employment. These unpaid wages include wages for unpaid work time (including minimum, straight time, and overtime wages), missed meal period premium wages, and missed rest period premium wages. Employees do not recall receiving their owed final wages at the time of their termination.

Employers' conduct violates Labor Code §§ 201 and 202. Labor Code § 203 provides that if an employer willfully fails to pay wages owed, in accordance with sections 201 and 202, then the wages of the employee shall continue as a penalty wage from the due date, and at the same rate until paid or until an action is commenced; but the wages shall not continue for more than thirty (30) days.

Accordingly, Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover from Employers their additionally accruing wages for each day they were not paid, at their regular hourly rate of pay, up to thirty (30) days maximum pursuant to Labor Code § 203. Moreover, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 2699(f)(2) for failing to timely pay all wages at termination.

Failure to Furnish Accurate Itemized Wage Statements

Labor Code § 226(a) provides that every employer shall, semimonthly or at the time of each payment of wages, furnish each of his or her employees an accurate itemized wage statement in writing showing nine pieces of information, including: (1) gross wages earned, (2) total hours worked by the employee, (3) the number of piece-rate units earned and any applicable piece rate if the employee is paid on a piece-rate basis, (4) all deductions, provided that all deductions made on written orders of the employee may be aggregated and shown as one item, (5) net wages earned, (6) the inclusive dates of the period for which the employee is paid, (7) the name of the employee and the last four digits of his or her social security number or an employee identification number other than a social security number, (8) the name and address of the legal entity that is the employer, and (9) all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period and the corresponding number of hours worked at each hourly rate by the employee. An employee is presumed to suffer an injury if this information is missing. (Lab. Code § 226(e)(2)(B)(iii).)

The statute further provides: "An employee suffering injury as a result of a knowing and intentional failure by an employer to comply with subdivision (a) is entitled to recover the greater of all actual damages or fifty dollars (\$50) for the initial pay period in which a violation occurs and one hundred dollars (\$100) per employee for each violation in a subsequent pay period, not to exceed an aggregate penalty of four thousand dollars (\$4,000), and is entitled to an award of costs and reasonable attorney's fees." (Lab. Code § 226(e)(1).)

Throughout the statutory period, Employers at times failed to, and continue at times to fail, to timely furnish Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with accurate, itemized wage statements showing all applicable hourly rates, and all gross and net wages earned (including correct hours worked, correct wages for meal periods that were not provided in accordance with California law, and correct wages for rest periods that were not authorized and permitted to take in accordance with California law).

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Because Employers at times violated Labor Code § 226, Employees and similarly Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, suffered injury and damage to their statutorily protected rights. Accordingly, Employees and similarly Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover from Employers the greater of their actual damages caused by Employers' failure to comply with Labor Code § 226(a), or an aggregate penalty not exceeding four thousand dollars (\$4,000) per employee. Moreover, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code § 226.3 for failing to timely furnish accurate itemized wage statements.

Failure to Indemnify for Necessary Expenditures

Labor Code § 2802(a) provides that employers shall indemnify their employees for all necessary business expenditures or losses that have been incurred by the employees in direct discharge of his or her duties. Throughout the statute of limitations period applicable to this cause of action, Employers at times wrongfully required Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to pay expenses that they incurred in direct discharge of their duties for Employers, including, but not limited to, the use of Employees' personal cell phone for work related purposes. Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, at times paid out-of-pocket for necessary employment-related expenses, including, but not limited to, the use of Employees' personal cell phone and meals for incoming patients. Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, incurred substantial expenses as a direct result of performing their job duties for Employers, but Employers failed to indemnify Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for these employment-related expenses.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 2802 and 2699(f)(2) for failing to indemnify Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for necessary business expenditures.

Failure to Produce Requested Employment Records

Employees requested a copy of their personnel file, but Employer did not provide it. Labor Code § 226 provides that current and former employees have the right to inspect or receive a copy of their records pertaining to their employment, upon reasonable request to their employer. Under this statute, an employer that receives a request to inspect or receive a copy of records pertaining to a current or former employee must comply with the request as soon as practicable, but no later than twenty-one (21) calendar days from the date of the request.

Labor Code § 1198.5(a) also provides that every current and former employee, or his or her representative, has the right to inspect and receive a copy of the personnel records that the employer maintains relating to the employees' performance or to any grievance concerning the employee. Under this statute, upon written request from a current or former employee or his or her representative, an employer must make the contents of those personnel records available for inspection or provide a copy of the personnel records to the current or former employee, or his or her representative, not later than thirty (30) calendar days from the date the employer receives the written request, subject to some limited exceptions. Labor Code § 432 provides that if an employee or applicant signs any instrument relating to the obtaining or holding of employment, he or she shall be given a copy of the instrument upon request. On information and belief, not just Employees, but also the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, submitted written request(s) to Employers for their payroll records, timecards, and personnel records but did not timely receive them as required by the Labor Code.

As a result, Employers are liable to Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for the civil penalties provided for in Labor Code §§ 226(f), 1198.5(k), and 2699 for failing to timely produce the requested records.

Recordkeeping Requirement Violations

California Labor Code section 1174 requires employers to keep “accurate and complete” payroll records showing, among other things, the hours worked daily by Employees and Aggrieved Employees. All applicable IWC Wage Orders, section 7 similarly requires employers to keep accurate time records reflecting the times during which all owed meal periods were provided each day.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed, and continue at times to fail, to keep accurate and complete payroll records as required by law, including but not limited to the following records: total daily hours worked, applicable rates of pay, time records showing when Employees and other Aggrieved Employees began and ended each work period, time records of meal periods, and accurate itemized wage statements.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed and continue at times to fail to keep accurate and complete records showing total hours worked by Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by virtue of Employers’ time rounding and/or auto deduction policies and practices and/or other off-the-clock work policies and practices. Employers failed at times and continue at times to fail to keep accurate and complete records showing total hours worked by virtue of Employers’ failure to relieve Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, of all duties and Employers’ control for unpaid meal periods, resulting in unpaid hours worked.

Based on information and belief, Employers further failed at times, and continue at times to fail, to record the true start and end times of Employees’ and Aggrieved Employees’ meal periods, or some of them. Based on further information and belief, Employers further failed at times and continue at times to fail, to record the true start and end times of Employees’ and Aggrieved Employees’ work shifts, or some of them.

Additionally, Employers at times failed, and continue at times to fail, to keep accurate records and issue accurate wage statements by not documenting accrued sick time for Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them. Employers’ failure to keep “accurate and complete” payroll records for Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, violates Labor Code sections 1174, 1198, 1199, and all applicable IWC Wage Orders, section 7. These violations subject Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code sections 558.1, 226.6, 1174.5 and 2699. Each violation of each Labor Code section and Wage Order provision, for each Aggrieved Employees (or some of them), results in a separate civil penalty.¹

Violation of Wage Theft Protection Act of 2011

Based on information and belief, Employers failed at times, and continue at times to fail, to comply with the notice requirements of Labor Code section 2810.5 (*i.e.*, the Wage Theft Protection Act of 2011) by, among other things, failing to provide Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with the rates of pay and overtime rates of pay applicable to their employment, allowances

¹ See Lab. Code §2699(f)(2) (establishing that the civil penalty is “for each aggrieved employee per pay period”).

claimed as part of the minimum wage, the regular payday designated by Employers, the name of the employer, including any “doing business as” names used, the name, address and telephone number of the workers’ compensation insurance carrier, information regarding paid sick leave, and other pertinent information required to be disclosed by Employers under Labor Code section 2810.5.

Employees are informed and believe that failure to provide such information, including rates of pay that are in effect, has permitted Employers to pay Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, at rates of pay that were not agreed upon and violate minimum wage and overtime wage laws in California. Employees are additionally informed and believe that the notice requirement of Labor Code section 2810.5 involves a mandatory payroll or workplace injury reporting. Among other relief, Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, may collect from Employers in connection with these violations’ civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 558 and 2699.

Violation of California Labor Code §§ 245-248.5

Throughout the relevant time period, Employers at times failed to provide proper paid sick leave to Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them. Employers either failed at times to provide paid sick leave at all or improperly calculated the sick leave accrual and the sick leave rate of pay owed to Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, by failing at times to base the accrued sick leave hours on the correct number of hours worked (as a result of the rounding/automatic deduction policies and practices for meal periods and/or shift start and end times/other required off-the-clock work including but not limited to unpaid meal periods that were restricted to Employers’ premises) and by failing at times to incorporate multiple rates of pay and/or all non-discretionary remuneration, including but not limited to, non-discretionary bonuses, shift differential pay and/or other non-discretionary compensation into the sick leave pay rate calculation.

Based on information and belief, Employers further failed at times to provide notice of the correct sick leave amount balance available to Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, on their wage statements or other written statement.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed to put Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, on notice of their paid sick leave rights, thereby failing at times to put their entitlement to sick leave in a Labor Code section 2810.5 notice. In addition, Employers at times failed to maintain accurate records of used sick leave and the balance of paid sick leave left to the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed to provide notice of sick leave amount balance left for Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, thus affecting their intelligent exercise of their paid sick leave. But for this failure, Employees, and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, would have used their paid sick leave at least prior to their respective separations, for as on several occasions thereafter, he or she would have been entitled to use the banked sick leave and earn appropriate compensation.

This illegal retention of paid sick leave is unlawful, and Employees seek all forms of injunctive relief, restitution, and declaratory relief as permitted by California law, on behalf of Employees and the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

In violation of Labor Code section 247.5, Employers at times failed to maintain records documenting the hours worked and paid sick days accrued and used by Employees and Aggrieved

Employees, or some of them, permitting the presumption that Employees and these Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, were entitled to the maximum number of hours accruable under this article.

Upon information and belief, Employers at times further failed and continue at times to fail to comply with Labor Code section 246, by failing to provide Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with a Labor Code section 226 wage statement, or separate writing containing the amount of paid sick leave available, or paid time off leave an employer provides in lieu of sick leave, at the time it pays wages. Employers at times unlawfully retained and continue at times to retain paid sick leave that should have been paid but was not, as a result of Employers' failure, at times, to properly institute a paid sick leave program. On information and belief, Employees allege that these practices at times were experienced and continue to be experienced at times by other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

Employees request all appropriate relief under the PAGA and these statutes, including but not limited to the restitution of earned paid sick leave that could have been used, but was not due to Employers' sole failure to institute such a paid sick leave entitlement or paid sick leave bank as required by California law.

Accordingly, Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to injunctive relief, attorneys' fees, declaratory relief, restitution, and penalties as permitted by law. Employees request all relief pursuant to the aforementioned code provisions, including but not limited to Labor Code sections 233 and 234, which incorporates the paid sick leave requirements.

Failure To Provide Supplemental Paid Sick Leave

Labor Code section 248.2 provides that all employers with 26 or more employees are required to provide up to 80 hours for covered employees to take 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave to care for themselves, to care for a family member or if it is vaccine-related. Based on information and belief, Employers at times violated Labor Code section 248.2 by not providing Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with required 2021 COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave.

Refusal to Make Payment

Labor Code section 216 declares unlawful an employer's refusal to pay wages due and payable and/or denial of the validity of any claim to wages due. Employers at times violated and continue at times to violate Labor Code section 216 by failing to pay Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, for all hours worked at the proper wage rate and by failing to pay Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, an additional hour of pay for each meal and/or rest period not provided or that was invalid. *Gould v. Maryland Sound Industries, Inc.* (1995) 31 Cal.App.4th 1137, 1154-1155. These violations subject Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code section 225.5. Each violation results in a *separate* civil penalty, for each Aggrieved Employees (or some of them) so affected, for each pay period (or some of them) during which the statute's provisions were violated.²

² Labor Code § 225.5 (establishing that “[i]n addition to, and entirely independent and apart from, any other penalty provided in this article, every person who unlawfully withholds wages due any employee in violation of sections 212, 216, 221, 222, or 223 shall be subject to a civil penalty...for each failure to pay each employee”) (emphasis added).

Seating Violations

Per section 14(A-B) of all applicable IWC Wage Orders, employees shall be provided with suitable seats when the nature of the work reasonably permits the use of seats and when they are not actively engaged in the work duties that would not permit them to be seated.

All applicable IWC Wage Orders, Section 14(A-B) provides:

(A) All working employees shall be provided with suitable seats when the nature of the work reasonably permits the use of seats.

(B) When employees are not engaged in the active duties of their employment and the nature of the work requires standing, an adequate number of suitable seats shall be placed in reasonable proximity to the work area and employees shall be permitted to use such seats when it does not interfere with the performance of their duties.

Suitable seating is one of the worker protections covered by California's Wage Orders, which have the same dignity as statutes, are remedial in nature and are to be broadly construed to effectuate the goal of protecting the comfort and welfare of employees. *Brinker Restaurant Corp. v. Superior Court*, 53 Cal.4th 1004, 1027 (2012).

Based on information and belief, Employers at times failed to provide Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, with suitable seating, and when such employees, or some of them, were not engaged in duties which required them to stand, at times no seating was placed in reasonable proximity to their workstations.

Moreover, based on information and belief, the nature of the work reasonably permitted the use of seats for at least part of the time that Aggrieved Employees were working. Lastly, based on information and belief, Aggrieved Employees at times were not engaged in active duties of their employment, yet at times there were no suitable seats in reasonable proximity to the work area, and use of seats would not have interfered with the performance of their duties.

Employers' Aggrieved Employees worked in various positions. The nature of Employees' and other Aggrieved Employees' work, or some of them, reasonably permitted the use of seats. However, Employers at times failed to provide suitable seating in reasonable proximity to Aggrieved Employees' work areas, or some of them, in violation of section 14(A-B) of applicable Wage Orders, and Labor Code sections 1198 and 1199, subjecting Employers to civil penalties under Labor Code sections 1199 and 2699. Each violation of each Labor Code section and IWC Wage Order provision, for each Aggrieved Employee, or some of them, results in a separate civil penalty.³

Statutory Wage Violations

Labor Code section 223 makes it unlawful for an employer to secretly pay wages lower than required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages. As described above, Employers at times willfully and systematically denied Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, of minimum and overtime wage compensation for all hours worked which resulted in the payment

³ See Lab. Code §2699(f)(2) (establishing that the civil penalty is "for each aggrieved employee per pay period").

of less than statutorily required wages owed to them. Employers at times acted with the intent to deprive some or all of them of statutory wages, including, but not limited to, overtime wages and minimum wages, to which they were entitled to under California law.

Thus, Employers at times paid Employees and other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, lower wages than those to which they were entitled, while purporting that Employees and all Aggrieved Employees were properly paid. As such, Employees and Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, are entitled to recover penalties, attorneys' fees, costs, and interest thereon, pursuant to Labor Code § 2699(f)-(g).

Failure to Pay Vested Vacation/Paid Time Off

California Labor Code section 227.3 provides that when an employer policy provides for paid vacations and/or paid time off, and an employee is terminated without having taken off his, her, or their vested vacation time, all vested vacation shall be paid to the employee as wages at the employee's final rate in accordance with such contract of employment or employer policy respecting eligibility or time served and that there shall be no forfeiture of vested vacation time or paid time off upon termination. Based on information and belief, Employers at times had and continue at times to have a policy and/or practice of failing to allow Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to use their earned vacation/paid time off during their employment and failing at times to pay all vested, accrued paid time off to Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, and/or Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, upon separation of employment, in violation of California law, including but not limited to, Labor Code section 227.3.

Failure to Timely Provide Temporary Workers with Owed Wages

On information and belief, Employers at times had and have failed to provide temporary workers, or some of them, with owed wages weekly by not later than the regular payday of the following week. As a result, pursuant to Labor Code section 201.3, Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code sections 201.3.

Unlawful Agreements/ Unlawful Criminal History Inquiries

Unlawful Agreements

Labor Code section 432.5 provides that "no employer ... shall require any employee or applicant for employment to agree, in writing, to any term or condition which is known by such employer ... to be prohibited by law." Based on information and belief, Employers at times required Employees, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to unlawful conditions of employment including but not limited to unlawful non-compete and/or non-solicitation agreements as well as unlawful criminal and/or financial checks as a condition of obtaining and/or continuing employment in violation of Labor Code section 432.5.

The California Labor Code places certain procedural and substantive limits on employers' ability to conduct employee background checks and on how employers can use the information they obtain through those background checks. Labor Code section 1024.5 states that employers, except for financial institutions, may order a credit check only if the individual works (or is applying to work) in certain positions (e.g., managerial positions, financially related positions, and certain government positions). Additionally, the Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act (ICRAA - CA Civil Code section 1786, *et seq.*) and the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA - 15

U.S.C. section 1681, *et seq.*) mandate several requirements prior to and following an employee background check, including but not limited to identifying an appropriate reason for the background check, a separate consent form with required disclosures and certain formatting requirements, additional forms such as a summary of rights, a way by which to request a copy of the report, as well as proper notice of adverse actions taken, among other statutory requirements.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times ordered unlawful financial credit checks on Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, in violation of Labor Code section 1024.5, and at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to provide ongoing written consent to the unlawful credit checks as a condition of employment, in violation of California and Federal law, which results in a further violation of Labor Code section 432.5.

Based on information and belief, Employers also at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to submit and/or agree to submit in writing to unlawful criminal background checks as a condition of obtaining and/or holding employment in violation of the ICRAA and the FCRA. For example, based on information and belief, Employers required Employees to submit and/or agree to submit in writing to an unlawful background check as a condition of obtaining and/or holding employment in violation of, including but not limited to, Labor Code section 432.5.

Based on information and belief, Employers at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to a background check which failed to abide by the requirements set forth in California Civil Code section 1786, *et seq.* and 15 U.S.C. section 1681, *et seq.*, including but not limited to by failing, at times, to provide a clear and conspicuous disclosure (and/or failing to provide any disclosure at all), failing at times to provide disclosures free of extraneous information, failing at times to provide a lawful purpose for the background check, failing at times to provide a summary of rights under the ICRAA and/or the FCRA, failing at times to provide a way by which the individual could request a copy of the report, failing at times to disclose the name, address, and telephone number of the third party preparing the report, and failing at times to properly obtain authorization or consent to such a background check, and thus was an unlawful background check.

By at times requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to unlawful criminal and/or financial checks not in conformance with the applicable laws, Employers violated Labor Code section 432.5.

Based on information and belief, Employers also at times required Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to provide ongoing consent to Employers to conduct background checks throughout the duration of employment, in violation of the ICRAA and/or FCRA and/or other applicable laws, resulting in a further violation of Labor Code section 432.5, by at times requiring applicants and employees, or some of them, to agree to an unlawful provision as a condition of employment.

Based on further information and belief, Employers knew that requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree at times to unlawful criminal and/or financial background checks as a condition of obtaining and/or holding employment was unlawful.

By requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree at times in writing to unlawful provisions as a condition of employment, Employers violated Labor Code section 432.5.

Unlawful Inquires into Criminal History

Labor Code section 432.7 prohibits an employer from asking applicants about past arrest(s) unless they resulted in conviction(s) and even then, certain limitations apply. Based on information and belief, Employers at times asked Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, about arrests not resulting in convictions on their employment application, in violation of California law.

Upon information and belief, Employers, in violation of California law, including but not limited to the Fair Chance Act/the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (“FEHA”), at times asked Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, about convictions prior to extending an offer of employment and/or otherwise impermissibly inquired into criminal history on their employment application in violation of California law.

By asking, at times, about arrests not resulting in convictions, Employers violated Labor Code section 432.7. By asking, at times, about convictions at the application phase or prior to extending an employment offer, Employers violated California’s Fair Chance Act, and thereby violated Labor Code section 432.5 by unlawfully requiring Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to disclose arrests and/or convictions as a condition of employment.

Unlawful PAGA Waiver

Additionally, Employers at times violated Labor Code section 432.5 by requiring Employees, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to other unlawful agreements, including but not limited to an unlawful waiver of PAGA and or representative actions, as a condition of employment.

An action pursuant to PAGA “...is a representative action on behalf of the state” *Kim v Reins Int’l California, Inc.*, (2020) 9 Cal. 5th 73, 86-87. It is well settled that agreements purporting to waive an employee’s right to a trial of PAGA claims is contrary to California law and unenforceable. *See Iskanian v CLS Transportation Los Angeles, LLC* (2014) 59 Cal. 4th 348, 384 (“We conclude that where, as here, an employment agreement compels the waiver of representative claims under the PAGA, it is contrary to public policy and unenforceable as a matter of state law.”).

Moreover, the California Supreme Court has ruled that a court cannot compel arbitration of an aggrieved employee’s individual PAGA claim because there is no such thing as an individual PAGA claim. *Kim v Reins Int’l California, Inc.*, (2020) 9 Cal. 5th 73, 86-87 (“There is no individual component to a PAGA action because ‘every PAGA action ... is a representative action on behalf of the state.’”).

Upon information and belief, Employers at times required Employees, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree in writing to waive their right to a trial of PAGA claims in violation of California law. By at times requiring Employees, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, to agree, in writing, to an unlawful PAGA waiver, Employers at times required written agreement to an unlawful provision as a condition of employment, which is a violation of labor code section 432.5.

As such, Employees, Aggrieved Employees and Exempt Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, continue to be subject at times to various unlawful provisions as a condition of employment.

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Preventing Employees from Using or Disclosing Skills, Knowledge, and Experience

On information and belief, Employers at times have prevented Employees and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge, and experience they obtained at Employers for purposes of competing with Employers, including, without limitation, preventing Employees, or some of them, from disclosing their wages in negotiating a new job with a prospective employer, and from disclosing who else works at Employers and under what circumstances they might be receptive to an offer from a rival employer. As such, Employees are informed and believe, this violates Business and Professions Code sections 17200, 16600 and 16700 and, by virtue thereof, various provisions of the Labor Code, including Labor Code sections 232, 232.5, and 1197.5, subdivision (k). Employers would be liable for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Whistleblower Violations

On information and belief, Employers at times have prevented Employees and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, from disclosing violations of state and federal law, either within Employers to their managers or outside Employers to private attorneys or government officials, among others, in violation of Business and Professions Code section 17200, and thus in violation of Labor Code section 1102.5. In addition, Employees are informed and believe that these policies and/or practices at times prevent Employees and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them, from disclosing information about unsafe or discriminatory working conditions, or about wage and hour violations in violation of Labor Code sections 98.6, 232, and 232.5. These violations of the Labor Code would expose Employers to liability for civil penalties pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.

Workplace Health and Safety Violations

On information and belief, Employers at times have failed to furnish and use safety devices and safeguards, and adopt and use practices, means, methods, operations and processes which are reasonably adequate to render such employment and place of employment safe and healthful, pursuant to, including but not limited to, Labor Code section 6401. Employees are informed and believe, and based thereon allege, that Employers at times have required or permitted employees, or some of them, to go or be in any employment or place of employment which is not safe and healthful, pursuant to Labor Code section 6402. Employees are informed and believe, and based thereon allege, that Employers at times have failed or neglected to provide and use safety devices and safeguards reasonably adequate to render the employment and place of employment safe; adopt and use methods and processes reasonably adequate to render the employment and place of employment safe; and do every other thing reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety, and health of employees, pursuant to Labor Code section 6403.

Employees are informed and believe, and based thereon allege, that these failures include, without limitation, at times failing to disinfect time clocks and other surfaces after use by Employees and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them; at times failing to provide adequate protection equipment to Employees and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them; and at times failing to provide adequate distance in working conditions between Employees and/or other Aggrieved Employees, or some of them.

On information and belief, Employers violated section 1527, 3366, 3457 and 8397.4 by failing at times to provide adequate and readily accessible sanitation facilities; a regular schedule for servicing, cleaning, and supplying each facility to ensure it is maintained in a clean, sanitary and

serviceable condition; an adequate supply of suitable cleansing agents, water, single-use towels or blowers; and a sufficient number of toilets to be used by each sex of employee.

Action for Civil Penalties Under PAGA

In light of the above, Employees allege that Employers at times violated the following provisions of the Labor Code with respect to the Aggrieved Employees, or some of them:

1. Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, 1197, and 1198 by failing at times to pay for all hours worked, including minimum wages, straight time wages, and overtime wages;
2. Labor Code § 226.7 and applicable Wage Orders by failing at times to provide meal periods;
3. Labor Code § 226.7 and applicable Wage Orders by failing at times to authorize and permit rest periods;
4. Labor Code § 204 by failing at times to pay all earned wages two times per month;
5. California Labor Code § 1174.5 and applicable Wage Orders by failing at times to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods taken or missed;
6. Labor Code §§ 201 to 203 by willfully failing at times to pay all wages owed at termination;
7. Labor Code § 226 by failing at times to provide accurate itemized wage statements;
8. Labor Code § 2802 by failing at times to indemnify for necessary expenditures;
9. Labor Code §§ 226, 432, and 1198.5 by failing at times to timely produce requested payroll records, timecards, and personnel records;
10. Labor Code § 1174 by failing at times to keep accurate and complete payroll records;
11. Labor Code §§ 245-248.5 by failing at times to provide proper sick leave and supplemental paid sick leave;
12. Labor Code § 216 for refusal at times to pay wages due and payable and/or denial at times of the validity of any claim to wages due;
13. Labor Code § 223 for at times secretly paying wages lower than required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages;
14. Labor Code § 227.3 for failure at times to pay vested vacation and/or paid time off;
15. Section 14(A-B) of all applicable IWC Wage Orders for failure at times to provide suitable seating;
16. Labor Code § 432.5 for unlawful agreements;
17. Labor Code § 201.3 for failure at times to timely provide temporary workers, or some of them, with wages;
18. Labor Code §§ 98.6, 232, 232.5, 1102.5, and 1197.5 for at times preventing employees, or some of them, from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge and experience they obtained at Employers, and whistleblower violations;
19. Labor Code § 432.7 for unlawful inquiries at times into criminal histories; and

LWDA

Amended Notice of Labor Code Violations and PAGA

April 8, 2026

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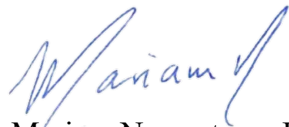
20. Labor Code §§ 1527, 3366, 3457, 8397.4, 6401, and 6401 for workplace health and safety violations.

Therefore, on behalf of potentially Aggrieved Employees, Employees seek applicable penalties related to the violations alleged above pursuant to the PAGA. These include, but are not limited to, penalties under Labor Code §§ 210, 226.3, 1174.5, 1197.1, and 2699.

Employees have placed Employers on notice by mailing a certified copy of this correspondence, as indicated on the first page. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM



Mariam Nazaretyan, Esq.

EXHIBIT 3

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Attorneys for Defendant
HORIZON SERVICES, INCORPORATED

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

MARHAWIT MELLES, individually, and on
behalf of all others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

HORIZON SERVICES, INCORPORATED, a
California corporation; and DOES 1 through 10,
inclusive,

Defendants.

Case No.: 23CV046524

*[Assigned for All Purposes To Hon. Somnath
Raj Chatterjee, Dept. 21]*

**AMENDED CLASS ACTION AND PAGA
SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

1 This Amended Class Action and PAGA Settlement Agreement (“Agreement”) is made by
2 and between Plaintiffs Marhawit Melles and John Rodrigues (“Plaintiffs”) and Defendant
3 Horizon Services, Incorporated (“Defendant”). The Agreement refers to Plaintiffs and Defendant
4 collectively as “Parties,” or individually as “Party.”

5 1. **DEFINITIONS.**

6 1.1 “Action” means Plaintiffs’ lawsuit alleging class and representative action wage and
7 hour violations against Defendant captioned *Marhawit Melles v. Horizon Services, Incorporated*,
8 Case No. 23CV046524, filed on October 4, 2023 in Alameda County Superior Court.

9 1.2 “Administrator” means Apex Class Action Administration, the neutral entity the Parties
10 have agreed to appoint to administer the Settlement.

11 1.3 “Administration Costs” means the amount the Administrator will be paid from the Gross
12 Settlement Amount to reimburse its reasonable fees and expenses in accordance with the
13 Administrator’s “not to exceed” bid submitted to the Court in connection with Preliminary
14 Approval of the Settlement.

15 1.4 “Aggrieved Employee” means all persons who worked for Defendant in California as an
16 hourly-paid or non-exempt employee at any time during the PAGA Period.

17 1.5 “Class” means all persons who worked for Defendant in California as an hourly-paid or
18 non-exempt employee at any time during the Class Period.

19 1.6 “Class Counsel” means John G. Yslas, Diego Aviles, Harry Erganyan, and Mariam
20 Nazaretyan of Wilshire Law Firm, PLC.

21 1.7 “Class Counsel Fees Payment” means an award of attorneys’ fees granted to Class
22 Counsel and paid from the Gross Settlement Amount. The Parties have agreed Plaintiffs will
23 request approval from the Court of up to one-third (1/3) of the GSA (currently Two Hundred
24 Forty-Three Thousand One Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$243,100.00)).

25 1.8 “Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment” means the amount allocated to Class
26 Counsel for reimbursement of reasonable expenses and costs incurred to prosecute the Action,
27 not to exceed Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$25,000.00) and paid from the
28 Gross Settlement Amount.

1 1.9 “Class Data” means Class Member identifying information in Defendant’s possession
2 including the Class Member’s name, last-known mailing address, Social Security number, and
3 number of Workweeks and PAGA Pay Periods.

4 1.10 “Class Member” or “Settlement Class Member” means a member of the Class, as either
5 a Participating Class Member or Non-Participating Class Member (including a Non-Participating
6 Class Member who qualifies as an Aggrieved Employee).

7 1.11 “Class Member Address Search” means the Administrator’s investigation and search for
8 current Class Member mailing addresses using all reasonably available sources, methods, and
9 means including, but not limited to, the National Change of Address database, skip traces, and
10 direct contact by the Administrator with Class Members.

11 1.12 “Class Notice” means the Court approved Notice of Settlement and hearing date for
12 Final Approval, to be mailed to Class Members in English with a Spanish translation in the form,
13 without material variation, attached as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference into this
14 Agreement.

15 1.13 “Class Period” or “Class Settlement Period” means the period from April 9, 2019,
16 through February 7, 2026 (“Settlement Class Period”).

17 1.14 “Class Representative” means the named Plaintiffs Marhawit Melles and John
18 Rodrigues in the Action.

19 1.15 “Class Representative Service Payment” or “Enhancement Award” means the payment
20 to the Class Representative for initiating the Action and providing services in support of the
21 Action.

22 1.16 “Court” means the Superior Court of California, County of Alameda.

23 1.17 “Defendant” means named Defendant Horizon Services, Incorporated.

24 1.18 “Defense Counsel” means Alexander Medina and Eric Lloyd of Medina McKelvey LLP.

25 1.19 “Effective Date” means the date by which both of the following have occurred: (a) the
26 Court enters a Judgment on its Order Granting Final Approval of the Settlement; and (b) the
27 Judgment is final. The Judgment is final as of the latest of the following occurrences: (a) if no
28 Participating Class Member objects to the Settlement, the day the Court enters Judgment; (b) if

one or more Participating Class Members objects to the Settlement, the day after the deadline for filing a notice of appeal from the Judgment; or (c) if a timely appeal from the Judgment is filed, the day after the appellate court affirms the Judgment and issues a remittitur.

1.20 “Final Approval” means the Court’s order granting final approval of the Settlement.

1.21 “Final Approval Hearing” means the Court’s hearing on the Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement.

1.22 “Final Judgment” means the Judgment entered by the Court upon granting Final Approval of the Settlement.

1.23 “Gross Settlement Amount” or “GSA” means Seven Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Three Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$729,300.00), which is the total amount Defendant agrees to pay under the Settlement, except as provided in Paragraph 8 below.

1.24 “Individual Class Payment” means the Participating Class Member’s pro rata share of the Net Settlement Amount calculated according to the number of Workweeks worked during the Class Period.

1.25 “Individual PAGA Payment” means the Aggrieved Employee’s pro rata share of 25% of the PAGA Penalties calculated according to the number of PAGA Pay Periods worked during the PAGA Period.

1.26 “Judgment” means the judgment entered by the Court based upon the Final Approval.

1.27 “LWDA” means the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the agency entitled, under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (i).

1.28 “LWDA PAGA Payment” means the 75% of the PAGA Penalties paid to the LWDA under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (i).

1.29 “Net Settlement Amount” means the Gross Settlement Amount, less the following payments in the amounts approved by the Court: PAGA Penalties payment, Class Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Administration Costs Payment. The remainder is to be paid to Participating Class Members as Individual Class Payments.

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1.30 “Non-Participating Class Member” means any Class Member who opts out of the Settlement by sending the Administrator a valid and timely Request for Exclusion.

1.31 “Operative Complaint” means the operative Third Amended Class Action and Representative Complaint filed on July 20, 2026 in the Action.

1.32 “PAGA Pay Period” means any Pay Period during which an Aggrieved Employee worked for Defendant for at least one day during the PAGA Period.

1.33 “PAGA Period” means the period from January 11, 2023, through February 7, 2026.

1.34 “PAGA” means the Private Attorneys General Act (Labor Code §§ 2698. et seq.).

1.35 “PAGA Notice” means Plaintiffs’ January 11, 2024 and April 8, 2026 letters to the LWDA and Defendant providing notice pursuant to Labor Code section 2699.3, subd.(a).

1.36 “PAGA Penalties” means the total amount of \$50,000.00 in PAGA civil penalties to be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount, allocated 25% (\$12,500.00) to the Aggrieved Employees and 75% (\$37,500.00) to the LWDA in settlement of PAGA claims.

1.37 “Participating Class Member” means a Class Member who does not submit a valid and timely Request for Exclusion from the Settlement.

1.38 “Plaintiffs” means Marhawit Melles and John Rodrigues, the named plaintiffs in the Action.

1.39 “Preliminary Approval” means the Court’s Order Granting Preliminary Approval of the Settlement.

1.40 “Released Class Claims” means the claims being released as described in Paragraph 5.2 below.

1.41 “Released PAGA Claims” means the claims being released as described in Paragraph 5.3 below.

1.42 “Released Parties” means Defendant, and any of its past and present owners, agents, officers, directors, employees, subsidiaries, affiliates, successors and assigns.

1.43 “Request for Exclusion” means a Class Member’s submission of a written request to be excluded from the Class Settlement signed by the Class Member.

1.44 "Response Deadline" means forty-five (45) days after the Administrator mails Notice to Class Members and Aggrieved Employees and shall be the last date on which Class Members may: (a) fax, email, or mail Requests for Exclusion from the Settlement, or (b) fax, email, or mail his or her Objection to the Settlement. Class Members to whom Notice packets are resent after having been returned undeliverable to the Administrator shall have an additional fourteen (14) calendar days beyond the Response Deadline has expired.

1.45 "Settlement" means the disposition of the Action effected by this Agreement and the Judgment.

1.46 "Workweek" means any week during which a Class Member worked for Defendant for at least one day, during the Class Period.

2. **RECITALS.**

2.1 On October 4, 2023, Kedo Jacob filed a Class Action Complaint alleging causes of action against Defendant for (1) Failure to Pay Minimum and Straight Time Wages; (2) Failure to Pay Overtime Wages; (3) Failure to Provide Meal Periods; (4) Failure to Authorize and Permit Rest Periods; (5) Failure to Timely Pay Final Wages at Termination; (6) Failure to Provide Accurate Itemized Wage Statements; (7) Failure to Indemnify Employees for Expenditures; (8) Failure to Produce Requested Employment Records; and (9) Unfair Business Practices.

2.2 On January 17, 2024, Kedo Jacob filed a first amended complaint adding Plaintiff Marhawit Melles as a named plaintiff. Thereafter, on February 16, 2024, Kedo Jacob was dismissed as a named plaintiff, without prejudice.

2.3 On January 11, 2024 and April 8, 2026, pursuant to Labor Code §2699.3, subd.(a), Plaintiffs gave notice to the LWDA and Defendant that Plaintiffs intended to proceed with a representative action under PAGA (LWDA-CM-1004504-24). On December 22, 2025, after the 65-day statutory period passed, Plaintiff Marhawit Melles filed a second amended complaint adding an additional claim for penalties pursuant to Labor Code § 2699, *et seq.*

2.4 Plaintiff Marhawit Melles filed the Operative Complaint on July 20, 2026 adding Plaintiff John Rodrigues as a named plaintiff.

1 2.5 Defendant denies the allegations in the Action, denies any failure to comply with the
2 laws identified in the Action, and denies any and all liability for the causes of action alleged in
3 the Action.

4 2.6 On March 23, 2026, the Parties participated in an all-day mediation presided over by
5 mediator Hon. Mitchel R. Goldberg (Ret.). The Parties accepted a mediator's proposal on April
6 10, 2026 and agreed on general settlement terms. The Parties memorialized their agreement in a
7 Memorandum of Understanding on June 23, 2026.

8 2.7 Class Counsel has conducted a thorough investigation into the facts of, and applicable
9 law to, the Action. Plaintiff obtained and analyzed a representative sampling of time and payroll
10 data for Class Members and the necessary policy documents through informal discovery to
11 properly evaluate the strengths and weakness of the claims. Plaintiff's investigation was sufficient
12 to satisfy the criteria for court approval set forth in *Dunk v. Ford Motor Co.*, 48 Cal.App.4th 1794,
13 1801 (1996) and *Kullar v. Foot Locker Retail, Inc.*, 168 Cal.App.4th 116, 129-130 (2008)
14 ("*Dunk/Kullar*").

15 2.8 The Court has not granted class certification because the Parties engaged in mediation
16 before any class certification.

17 3. **MONETARY TERMS.**

18 3.1 Gross Settlement Amount. Except as otherwise provided by Paragraph 8 below,
19 Defendant will pay Seven Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Three Hundred Dollars and Zero
20 Cents (\$729,300.00) to fully settle, resolve, and extinguish all claims asserted in the Action,
21 including without limitation all claims asserted in the PAGA Notice. The Gross Settlement
22 Amount is non-reversionary and does not include employer payroll taxes owed on the wage
23 portions of the Individual Class Payments, which Defendant will pay separately.

24 3.2 Payments from the Gross Settlement Amount. The Administrator will make and deduct
25 the following payments from the Gross Settlement Amount, in the amounts specified by the Court
26 in the Final Approval:

27 3.2.1 To Plaintiffs: A payment for the Class Representative Service Payment of up to Ten
28 Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$10,000.00) for Plaintiff Marhawit Melles and Seven

1 Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$7,500.00) for Plaintiff John Rodrigues in
2 addition to any Individual Class Payment and any Individual PAGA Payment the Class
3 Representatives are entitled to receive as Participating Class Members. Defendant will not oppose
4 Plaintiffs' request for a Class Representative Service Payment that does not exceed this amount.
5 As part of the motion for the Class Counsel Fees and Litigation Expenses Payments, Plaintiffs
6 will seek Court approval for any Class Representative Service Payments no later than sixteen (16)
7 court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, or as otherwise ordered by the Court. If the Court
8 approves a Class Representative Service Payments less than the amount requested, the
9 Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net Settlement Amount to be distributed to
10 Participating Class Members. The Administrator will pay the Class Representative Service
11 Payments using IRS Form 1099. Plaintiffs assume full responsibility and liability for employee
12 taxes owed on the Class Representative Service Payments.

13 3.2.2 To Class Counsel: A Class Counsel Fees Payment of not more than one-third of the
14 Gross Settlement Amount, which is currently estimated to be Two Hundred Forty-Three
15 Thousand One Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$243,100.00) and a Class Counsel Litigation
16 Expenses Payment for actual costs, not to exceed Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents
17 (\$25,000.00). Defendant will not oppose requests for these payments. Plaintiffs and/or Class
18 Counsel will file a motion for Class Counsel Fees and Litigation Expenses Payment no later than
19 sixteen (16) court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, or as otherwise ordered by the Court.
20 If the Court approves a Class Counsel Fees Payment and/or a Class Counsel Litigation Expenses
21 Payment less than the amounts requested, the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net
22 Settlement Amount for distribution to Participating Class Members. Released Parties shall have
23 no liability to Class Counsel or any other Plaintiffs' counsel arising from any claim to any portion
24 of Class Counsel Fee Payment and/or Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment. The
25 Administrator will pay the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class Counsel Expenses Payment
26 using one or more IRS 1099 Forms. Class Counsel assumes full responsibility and liability for
27 taxes owed on the Class Counsel Fees Payment and the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses
28

1 Payment and holds Defendant harmless, and indemnifies Defendant, from any dispute or
2 controversy regarding any division or sharing of any of these Payments.

3 3.2.3 To the Administrator: An Administrator Costs Payment not to exceed Nine
4 Thousand One Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$9,100.00) except for a showing of good cause
5 and as approved by the Court. To the extent the Administration Costs are less or the Court
6 approves payment of less than \$9,100.00, the Administrator will retain the remainder in the Net
7 Settlement Amount to be distributed to Participating Class Members.

8 3.2.4 To Each Participating Class Member: An Individual Class Payment is calculated by
9 (a) dividing the Net Settlement Amount by the total number of Workweeks worked by all
10 Participating Class Members during the Class Period, and (b) multiplying the result by each
11 individual Participating Class Member's Workweeks.

12 3.2.4.1 Tax Allocation of Individual Class Payments. Twenty percent (20%) of
13 each Participating Class Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to the Settlement
14 of wage claims (the "Wage Portion"). The Wage Portion is subject to tax withholding and will be
15 reported on an IRS W-2 Form. The remaining eighty percent (80%) of each Participating Class
16 Member's Individual Class Payment will be allocated to the settlement of claims for interest,
17 reimbursement, and penalties (the "Non-Wage Portion"). The Non-Wage Portions are not subject
18 to wage withholdings and will be reported on IRS 1099 Forms. Participating Class Members
19 assume full responsibility and liability for any employee taxes owed on their Individual Class
20 Payment.

21 3.2.4.2 Effect of Non-Participating Class Members on Calculation of Individual
22 Class Payments. Non-Participating Class Members will not receive any Individual Class
23 Payments. The Administrator will retain amounts equal to their Individual Class Payments in the
24 Net Settlement Amount for distribution to Participating Class Members on a pro-rata basis.

25 3.2.5 To the LWDA and Aggrieved Employees: PAGA Penalties in the amount of Fifty
26 Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$50,000.00) to be paid from the Gross Settlement Amount,
27 with 75% (\$37,500.00) allocated to the LWDA PAGA Payment and 25% (\$12,500.00) allocated
28 to the Individual PAGA Payments.

1 3.2.5.1 The Administrator will calculate each Individual PAGA Payment by (a)
2 dividing the amount of the Aggrieved Employees' 25% share of PAGA Penalties of \$12,500.00
3 by the total number of PAGA Period Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees during the
4 PAGA Period, and (b) multiplying the result by each individual Aggrieved Employee's PAGA
5 Pay Periods. Aggrieved Employees assume full responsibility and liability for any taxes owed on
6 their Individual PAGA Payment.

7 3.2.5.2 If the Court approves PAGA Penalties of less than the amount requested,
8 the Administrator will allocate the remainder to the Net Settlement Amount to be distributed to
9 Participating Class Members. The Administrator will report the Individual PAGA Payments on
10 IRS 1099 Forms.

11 **4. SETTLEMENT FUNDING AND PAYMENTS.**

12 4.1 Class Workweeks and Aggrieved Employee Pay Periods. Based on a review of its
13 records, Defendant estimates there are 614 Class Members who collectively worked a total of
14 approximately 33,150 workweeks between April 9, 2019 and March 23, 2026, and 407 Aggrieved
15 Employees who worked a total of approximately 8,590 PAGA Pay Periods through March 23,
16 2026.

17 4.2 Class Data. Not later than fourteen (14) days after the Court grants Preliminary Approval
18 of the Settlement, Defendant will deliver the Class Data to the Administrator, in the form of a
19 Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. To protect Class Members' privacy rights, the Administrator must
20 maintain the Class Data in confidence, use the Class Data only for purposes of this Settlement
21 and for no other purpose, and restrict access to the Class Data to Administrator employees who
22 need access to the Class Data to effect and perform under this Agreement. Defendant has a
23 continuing duty to immediately notify Class Counsel if it discovers that the Class Data omitted
24 class member identifying information and to provide corrected or updated Class Data as soon as
25 reasonably feasible. Without any extension of the deadline by which Defendant must send the
26 Class Data to the Administrator, the Parties and their counsel will expeditiously use best efforts,
27 in good faith, to reconstruct or otherwise resolve any issues related to missing or omitted Class
28 Data.

1 4.3 Funding of Gross Settlement Amount. Defendant shall fully fund the Gross Settlement
2 Amount and the amounts necessary to fully pay Defendant's share of payroll taxes by transmitting
3 the funds to the Administrator no later than thirty (30) days after the Effective Date.

4 4.4 Payments from the Gross Settlement Amount. Within ten (10) days after Defendant fully
5 funds the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator will mail checks for all Individual Class
6 Payments, all Individual PAGA Payments, the LWDA PAGA Payment, the Administration Costs
7 Payment, the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and
8 the Class Representative Service Payment. Disbursement of the Class Counsel Fees Payment, the
9 Class Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment, and the Class Representative Service Payment shall
10 not precede disbursement of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments.

11 4.4.1 The Administrator will issue checks for the Individual Class Payments and/or
12 Individual PAGA Payments and send them to the Class Members via First Class U.S. Mail. The
13 face of each check shall prominently state the date (120 days after the date of mailing) when the
14 check will be voided ("Void Date"). The Administrator will cancel all checks not cashed by the
15 Void Date. The Administrator will send checks for Individual Settlement Payments to all
16 Participating Class Members (including those for whom the Class Notice was returned
17 undelivered). The Administrator will send checks for Individual PAGA Payments to all
18 Aggrieved Employees including Non-Participating Class Members who qualify as Aggrieved
19 Employees (including those for whom Class Notice was returned undelivered). The Administrator
20 may send Participating Class Members a single check combining the Individual Class Payment
21 and the Individual PAGA Payment. Before mailing any checks, the Settlement Administrator
22 must update the recipients' mailing addresses using the National Change of Address Database.

23 4.4.2 The Administrator must conduct a Class Member Address Search for all other Class
24 Members whose checks are returned undelivered without USPS forwarding address. Within seven
25 (7) days of receiving a returned check, the Administrator must re-mail checks to the USPS
26 forwarding address provided or to an address ascertained through the Class Member Address
27 Search. The Administrator need not take further steps to deliver checks to Class Members whose
28 re-mailed checks are returned as undelivered. The Administrator shall promptly send a

1 replacement check to any Class Member whose original check was lost or misplaced, requested
2 by the Class Member prior to the Void Date.

3 4.4.3 For any Class Member whose Individual Class Payment check or Individual PAGA
4 Payment check is uncashed and canceled after the Void Date, the Administrator shall transmit the
5 funds represented by such checks to a Court approved nonprofit organization or foundation, Legal
6 Aid at Work (“*Cy Pres* Recipient”), thereby leaving no “unpaid residue” subject to the
7 requirements of California Code of Civil Procedure Section 384, subd. (b). The Parties, Class
8 Counsel, and Defense Counsel represent that they have no interest or relationship, financial or
9 otherwise, with the intended *Cy Pres* Recipient.

10 4.4.4 The payment of Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments shall
11 not obligate Defendant to confer any additional benefits or make any additional payments to Class
12 Members (such as 401(k) contributions or bonuses) beyond those specified in this Agreement.

13 5. **RELEASES OF CLAIMS.** Effective on the date when Defendant fully funds the Gross
14 Settlement Amount and all employer payroll taxes owed on the Wage Portion of the Individual
15 Class Payments, Plaintiffs, Class Members, and Class Counsel will release claims against all
16 Released Parties as follows:

17 5.1 **Plaintiffs’ Release.** Plaintiffs discharge Released Parties from all claims,
18 transactions, or occurrences, that occurred during the Class Period, including all claims that were,
19 or reasonably could have been, alleged, based on the facts contained in the Operative Complaint;
20 and claims under the Fair Employment and Housing Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Title
21 VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the California Labor Code, and all equivalent claims under
22 federal law (“Plaintiffs’ Release”). Notwithstanding the General Release described herein and
23 incorporated by reference to Plaintiffs’ Release, the Parties expressly agree to exclude from this
24 General Release all claims or actions associated with Plaintiff John Rodrigues’ individual
25 wrongful termination claims. Plaintiffs’ Release also does not extend to any claims or actions to
26 enforce this Agreement, or to any claims for vested benefits, unemployment benefits, disability
27 benefits, social security benefits, workers’ compensation benefits that arose at any time, or based
28 on occurrences outside the Class Period. Plaintiffs acknowledge that Plaintiffs may discover facts

1 or law different from, or in addition to, the facts or law that Plaintiffs now know or believe to be
2 true but agrees, nonetheless, that Plaintiffs' Release shall be and remain effective in all respects,
3 notwithstanding such different or additional facts or Plaintiffs' discovery of them.

4 5.1.1 Plaintiffs' Waiver of Rights Under California Civil Code Section 1542. For
5 purposes of Plaintiffs' Release, Plaintiffs expressly waive and relinquishe the provisions, rights,
6 and benefits, if any, of section 1542 of the California Civil Code, which reads:

7 A general release does not extend to claims that the creditor or releasing party does
8 not know or suspect to exist in his or her favor at the time of executing the release,
9 and that if known by him or her would have materially affected his or her settlement
10 with the debtor or Released Party.

11 5.2 Released Class Claims: All Participating Class Members will release all claims, rights,
12 demands, liabilities, and causes of action, alleged or which could have reasonably been alleged
13 based on the facts alleged in the operative Complaint, including but not limited to: (1) failure to
14 pay minimum and straight time wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 204, 1194, 1194.2, and
15 1197); (2) failure to pay overtime wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198); (3)
16 failure to provide meal periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512); (4) failure to
17 authorize and permit rest periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226.7); (5) failure to timely
18 pay final wages at termination (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 201-203); (6) failure to provide
19 accurate itemized wage statements (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226); (7) failure to indemnify
20 employees for expenditures (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 2802); (8) failure to produce
21 requested employment records (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226 and 1198.5); and (9) unfair
22 business practices (pursuant to Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.*). The enumeration of
23 these specific claims shall neither enlarge nor narrow the scope of *res judicata* based on the claims
24 that were asserted in the Action or could have been asserted in the Action based on the facts and
25 circumstances alleged in the Operative Complaint. The Released Class Claims are those that
26 accrued during the Class Period.

27 5.3 Released PAGA Claims: Plaintiffs, as a proxy or agent of the LWDA, release all claims
28 for PAGA civil penalties that could have been sought by the LWDA for the violations alleged in

1 Plaintiffs' January 11, 2024 and April 8, 2026 PAGA Notices, including but not limited to: (1)
2 failure to pay for all hours worked, including minimum wages, straight time wages, and overtime
3 wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, 1197 and 1198); (2) failure to provide
4 meal periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 226.7); (3) failure to authorize and permit rest
5 periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 226.7); (4) failure to pay all earned wages twice per month
6 (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 204); (5) failure to maintain accurate records of hours worked and
7 meal periods taken or missed (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 1174.5); (6) failure to timely pay
8 final wages at termination (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 201 – 203); (7) failure to provide
9 accurate itemized wage statements (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 226); (8) failure to indemnify
10 employees for expenditures (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 2802); (9) failure to produce requested
11 employment records (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226, 432, and 1198.5); (10) failure to keep
12 accurate and complete payroll records (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 1174); (11) failures to
13 provide proper sick leave and supplemental paid sick leave (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 245-
14 248.5); (12) refusal to pay wages due and payable and/or denial at times of the validity of any
15 claim to wages due (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 216); (13) secretly paying wages lower than
16 required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 223); (14)
17 failure to pay vested vacation and/or paid time off (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 227.3); (15)
18 failure to provide suitable seating (pursuant to section 14(A-B) of all applicable IWC Wage
19 Orders); (16) unlawful agreements (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 432.5); (17) failure to timely
20 provide temporary workers with wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 201.3); (18) preventing
21 employees from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge and experience they obtained at
22 Defendant, and whistleblower violations (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 98.6, 232, 232.5,
23 1102.5, and 1197.5); (19) unlawful inquiries into criminal histories (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code
24 § 432.7); and (20) workplace health and safety violations (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 1527,
25 3366, 3457, 8397.4, 6401, and 6401). The Released PAGA Claims are those that accrued during
26 the PAGA Period.

27 6. **MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL**. Plaintiffs will prepare and file a motion
28 for preliminary approval ("Motion for Preliminary Approval").

1 6.1 Plaintiffs' Responsibilities. Plaintiffs will prepare all documents necessary for obtaining
2 Preliminary Approval, including: (i) a draft of the notice, and memorandum in support, of the
3 Motion for Preliminary Approval that includes an analysis of the Settlement under *Dunk/Kullar*
4 and a request for approval of the PAGA Settlement under Labor Code Section 2699, subd. (f)(2));
5 (ii) a draft proposed Order Granting Preliminary Approval and Approval of PAGA Settlement;
6 (iii) a draft proposed Class Notice; (iv) a signed declaration from Plaintiffs confirming willingness
7 and competency to serve and disclosing all facts relevant to any actual or potential conflicts of
8 interest with Class Members, and/or the Administrator; (v) a signed declaration from Class
9 Counsel's firm attesting to its competency to represent the Class Members; its timely transmission
10 to the LWDA of all necessary PAGA documents (initial notice of violations (Labor Code section
11 2699.3, subd. (a)), Operative Complaint (Labor Code section 2699, subd. (l)(1)), this Agreement
12 (Labor Code section 2699, subd. (l)(2)); and (vi) all facts relevant to any actual or potential
13 conflict of interest with Class Members, and/or the Administrator.

14 6.2 Responsibilities of Counsel. Class Counsel and Defense Counsel are jointly responsible
15 for expeditiously finalizing the Motion for Preliminary Approval. Class Counsel will obtain a
16 prompt hearing date for the Motion for Preliminary Approval, file the Motion for Preliminary
17 Approval no later than sixteen (16) court days before the hearing, unless otherwise ordered by the
18 Court, and deliver the Court's Preliminary Approval Order to the Administrator.

19 6.3 Duty to Cooperate. If the Parties disagree on any aspect of the proposed Motion for
20 Preliminary Approval and/or the supporting declarations and documents, Class Counsel and
21 Defense Counsel will expeditiously work together on behalf of the Parties by meeting in person
22 or by telephone, and in good faith, to resolve the disagreement. If the Court does not grant
23 Preliminary Approval or conditions Preliminary Approval on any material change to this
24 Agreement, Class Counsel and Defense Counsel will expeditiously work together on behalf of
25 the Parties by meeting in person or by telephone, and in good faith, to modify the Agreement and
26 otherwise satisfy the Court's concerns.

27 7. **SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATION.**
28

1 7.1 Selection of Administrator. The Parties have jointly selected Apex Class Action
2 Administration to serve as the Administrator and verified that, as a condition of appointment, the
3 Administrator agrees to be bound by this Agreement and to perform, as a fiduciary, all duties
4 specified in this Agreement in exchange for payment of Administration Costs. The Parties and
5 their Counsel represent that they have no interest or relationship, financial or otherwise, with the
6 Administrator other than a professional relationship arising out of prior experiences administering
7 settlements.

8 7.2 Employer Identification Number. The Administrator shall have and use its own
9 Employer Identification Number for purposes of calculating payroll tax withholdings and
10 providing reports to state and federal tax authorities.

11 7.3 Qualified Settlement Fund. The Administrator shall establish a settlement fund that
12 meets the requirements of a Qualified Settlement Fund (“QSF”) under US Treasury Regulation
13 section 468B-1 for the funding of the GSA. Any interest that accrues on the GSA sums paid into
14 the QSF prior to distribution by the Administrator will become part of the NSA for distribution
15 to Participating Class Members.

16 7.4 Notice to Class Members.

17 7.4.1 No later than five (5) calendar days after receipt of the Class Data, the Administrator
18 shall notify Class Counsel that the list has been received and state the number of Class Members,
19 Aggrieved Employees, Workweeks, and Pay Periods in the Class Data.

20 7.4.2 Using best efforts to perform as soon as possible, and in no event later than 14
21 (fourteen) days after receiving the Class Data, the Administrator will send to all Class Members
22 identified in the Class Data, via first-class United States Postal Service (“USPS”) mail, the Class
23 Notice with Spanish translation substantially in the form attached to this Agreement as Exhibit
24 A. The first page of the Class Notice shall prominently estimate the dollar amounts of any
25 Individual Class Payment and/or Individual PAGA Payment payable to the Class Member, and
26 the number of Workweeks and PAGA Pay Periods used to calculate these amounts. Before
27 mailing Class Notices, the Administrator shall update Class Member addresses using the National
28 Change of Address database.

1 7.4.3 Not later than five (5) calendar days after the Administrator's receipt of any Class
2 Notice returned by the USPS as undelivered, the Administrator shall re-mail the Class Notice
3 using any forwarding address provided by the USPS. If the USPS does not provide a forwarding
4 address, the Administrator shall conduct a Class Member Address Search, and re-mail the Class
5 Notice to the most current address obtained. The Administrator has no obligation to make further
6 attempts to locate or send Class Notice to Class Members whose Class Notice is returned by the
7 USPS a second time.

8 7.4.4 The deadlines for Class Members' written objections, challenges to Workweeks
9 and/or Pay Periods, and Requests for Exclusion will be extended an additional fourteen days (14)
10 days beyond the forty-five (45) days otherwise provided in the Class Notice for all Class Members
11 whose notice is re-mailed. The Administrator will inform the Class Member of the extended
12 deadline with the re-mailed Class Notice.

13 7.4.5 If the Administrator, Defendant, or Class Counsel is contacted by or otherwise
14 discovers any persons who believe they should have been included in the Class Data and should
15 have received Class Notice, the Parties will expeditiously meet and confer in person or by
16 telephone, and in good faith in an effort to agree on whether to include them as Class Members.
17 If the Parties agree, such persons will be Class Members entitled to the same rights as other Class
18 Members, and the Administrator will send, via email or overnight delivery, a Class Notice
19 requiring them to exercise options under this Agreement not later than fourteen (14) days after
20 receipt of Class Notice, or the deadline dates in the Class Notice, whichever are later.

21 7.5 Requests for Exclusion (Opt-Outs).

22 7.5.1 Class Members who wish to exclude themselves (opt-out of) the Class Settlement
23 must send the Administrator, by fax, email, or mail, a signed written Request for Exclusion not
24 later than forty-five (45) days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice (plus an additional
25 fourteen (14) days for Class Members whose Class Notice is re-mailed). A Request for Exclusion
26 is a letter from a Class Member or his/her representative that reasonably communicates the Class
27 Member's election to be excluded from the Settlement and includes the Class Member's name,
28

1 address and email address or telephone number. To be valid, a Request for Exclusion must be
2 timely faxed, emailed, or postmarked by the Response Deadline.

3 7.5.2 The Administrator may not reject a Request for Exclusion as invalid because it fails
4 to contain all the information specified in the Class Notice. The Administrator shall accept any
5 Request for Exclusion as valid if the Administrator can reasonably ascertain the identity of the
6 person as a Class Member and the Class Member's desire to be excluded. The Administrator's
7 determination shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge. If the
8 Administrator has reason to question the authenticity of a Request for Exclusion, the
9 Administrator may demand additional proof of the Class Member's identity. The Administrator's
10 determination of authenticity shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to
11 challenge.

12 7.5.3 Every Class Member who does not submit a timely and valid Request for Exclusion
13 is deemed to be a Participating Class Member under this Agreement, entitled to all benefits and
14 bound by all terms and conditions of the Settlement, including the Participating Class Members'
15 Releases under paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of this Agreement, regardless of whether the Participating
16 Class Member actually receives the Class Notice or objects to the Settlement.

17 7.5.4 Every Class Member who submits a valid and timely Request for Exclusion is a
18 Non-Participating Class Member and shall not receive an Individual Class Payment or have the
19 right to object to the class action components of the Settlement. Because future PAGA claims are
20 subject to claim preclusion upon entry of the Judgment, Non-Participating Class Members who
21 are Aggrieved Employees are deemed to release the Released PAGA Claims identified in
22 Paragraph 5.3 of this Agreement and are eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment.

23 7.6 Challenges to Calculation of Workweeks. Each Class Member shall have forty-five (45)
24 days after the Administrator mails the Class Notice (plus an additional fourteen (14) days for
25 Class Members whose Class Notice is re-mailed) to challenge the number of Class Workweeks
26 and PAGA Pay Periods allocated to the Class Member in the Class Notice. The Class Member
27 may challenge the allocation by communicating with the Administrator via fax, email or mail.
28 The Administrator must encourage the challenging Class Member to submit supporting

1 documentation. In the absence of any contrary documentation, the Administrator is entitled to
2 presume that the Workweeks contained in the Class Notice are correct so long as they are
3 consistent with the Class Data. The Administrator's determination of each Class Member's
4 allocation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods shall be final and not appealable or otherwise
5 susceptible to challenge. The Administrator shall promptly provide copies of all challenges to the
6 calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods to Defense Counsel and Class Counsel and the
7 Administrator's determination of the challenges.

8 **7.7 Objections to Settlement.**

9 7.7.1 Only Participating Class Members may object to the class action components of the
10 Settlement and/or this Agreement, including contesting the fairness of the Settlement, and/or
11 amounts requested for the Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation Expenses
12 Payment and/or Class Representative Service Payment.

13 7.7.2 Participating Class Members may send written objections to the Administrator, by
14 fax, email, or mail. In the alternative, Participating Class Members may appear in Court (or hire
15 an attorney to appear in Court) to present verbal objections at the Final Approval Hearing. A
16 Participating Class Member who elects to send a written objection to the Administrator must do
17 so not later than forty-five (45) days after the Administrator's mailing of the Class Notice (plus
18 an additional fourteen (14) days for Class Members whose Class Notice was re-mailed).

19 7.7.3 Non-Participating Class Members have no right to object to any of the class action
20 components of the Settlement.

21 **7.8 Administrator Duties.** The Administrator has a duty to perform or observe all tasks to be
22 performed or observed by the Administrator contained in this Agreement or otherwise.

23 7.8.1 Website, Email Address and Toll-Free Number. The Administrator will establish,
24 maintain and use an internet website to post information of interest to Class Members including
25 the date, time and location for the Final Approval Hearing and copies of the Settlement
26 Agreement; Motion for Preliminary Approval; Preliminary Approval Order; Class Notice;
27 Motion for Final Approval; Motion for Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation
28 Expenses Payment and Class Representative Service Payment; the Final Approval Order; and the

Judgment. The Administrator will also maintain and monitor an email address and a toll-free telephone number to receive Class Member calls, faxes and emails.

7.8.2 Requests for Exclusion (Opt-outs) and Exclusion List. The Administrator will promptly review on a rolling basis Requests for Exclusion to ascertain their validity. Not later than five (5) days after the expiration of the deadline for submitting Requests for Exclusion, the Administrator shall email a list to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel containing (a) the names and other identifying information of Class Members who have timely submitted valid Requests for Exclusion (“Exclusion List”); (b) the names and other identifying information of Class Members who have submitted invalid Requests for Exclusion; (c) copies of all Requests for Exclusion from Settlement submitted (whether valid or invalid).

7.8.3 Weekly Reports. The Administrator must, on a weekly basis, provide written reports to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel that, among other things, tally the number of: Class Notices mailed or re-mailed, Class Notices returned undelivered, Requests for Exclusion (whether valid or invalid) received, objections received, challenges to Workweeks and/or Pay Periods received and/or resolved, and checks mailed for Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments (“Weekly Report”). The Weekly Reports must include the Administrator’s assessment of the validity of Requests for Exclusion and attach copies of all Requests for Exclusion and objections received.

7.8.4 Workweek and/or Pay Period Challenges. The Administrator has the authority to address and make final decisions consistent with the terms of this Agreement on all Class Member challenges over the calculation of Workweeks and/or Pay Periods. The Administrator’s decision shall be final and not appealable or otherwise susceptible to challenge.

7.8.5 Administrator’s Declaration. Not later than fourteen (14) days before the date by which Plaintiffs are required to file the Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement, the Administrator will provide to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel, a signed declaration suitable for filing in Court attesting to its due diligence and compliance with all of its obligations under this Agreement, including, but not limited to, its mailing of Class Notice, the Class Notices returned as undelivered, the re-mailing of Class Notices, attempts to locate Class Members, the

total number of Requests for Exclusion from Settlement it received (both valid or invalid), the number of written objections and attach the Exclusion List. The Administrator will supplement its declaration as needed or requested by the Parties and/or the Court. Class Counsel is responsible for filing the Administrator's declaration(s) in Court.

7.8.6 Final Report by Settlement Administrator. Within ten (10) days after the Administrator disburses all funds in the Gross Settlement Amount, the Administrator will provide Class Counsel and Defense Counsel with a final report detailing its disbursements by employee identification number only of all payments made under this Agreement. At least fifteen (15) days before any deadline set by the Court, the Administrator will prepare, and submit to Class Counsel and Defense Counsel, a signed declaration suitable for filing in Court attesting to its disbursement of all payments required under this Agreement. Class Counsel is responsible for filing the Administrator's declaration in Court.

8. **CLASS SIZE ESTIMATES and ESCALATOR CLAUSE.** Based on its records, Defendant previously represented that there were 614 Class Members who collectively worked a total of approximately 33,150 Workweeks between April 9, 2019 and March 23, 2026, and 407 Aggrieved Employees who worked a total of 8,590 PAGA Pay between January 11, 2023 and March 23, 2026. Defendant now represents, based on Defendant's subsequent review and analysis of updated data, that as of February 7, 2026, Class Members collectively worked a total of 36,369 Workweeks. Pursuant to the escalator provision, Defendant has elected to end the Class Period and PAGA Period on February 7, 2026, such that the number of covered Workweeks does not exceed 36,465 Workweeks. Accordingly, the Class Period shall be April 9, 2019, through February 7, 2026, and the PAGA Period shall be January 11, 2023, through February 7, 2026. The Gross Settlement Amount shall remain \$729,300.00. If, on final calculation, the total number of Workweeks is greater than 10% higher than 33,150 Workweeks (i.e. greater than 36,465 Workweeks), then the Gross Settlement Amount will be proportionally increased by the Workweeks worked in excess of 36,465 by multiplying the excess Workweeks by the per Workweek value. If this provision is triggered so as to increase the Gross Settlement Amount, the Parties agree that the portion of the Gross Settlement Amount allocated to attorneys' fees will

increase proportionally such that the total amount of attorneys' fees remains one-third (1/3) of the Gross Settlement Amount after the upward adjustment required by this provision is implemented.

9. **DEFENDANT'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW.** Defendant represents, as of the date of this Settlement Agreement, there are approximately 614 Class Members. If the number of valid Requests for Exclusion identified in the Exclusion List is greater than 10%, Defendant may, but is not obligated, to elect to withdraw from the Settlement. The Parties agree that, if Defendant withdraws, the Settlement shall be *void ab initio*, have no force or effect whatsoever, and that neither Party will have any further obligation to perform under this Agreement; provided, however, Defendant will remain responsible for paying all Settlement Administration Costs incurred to that point, including costs for any corrective notices the Court orders notifying Class Members of Defendant's withdrawal from the settlement. Defendant must notify Class Counsel and the Court of its election to withdraw not later than seven (7) days after the Administrator sends the final Exclusion List to Defense Counsel; late elections will have no effect.

10. **MOTION FOR FINAL APPROVAL.** Not later than sixteen (16) court days before the calendared Final Approval Hearing, unless otherwise scheduled by the Court, Plaintiffs will file in Court, a Motion for Final Approval of the Settlement that includes a request for approval of the PAGA settlement under Labor Code section 2699, subd. (l); a Proposed Final Approval Order; and a proposed Judgment (collectively "Motion for Final Approval"). Plaintiffs shall provide drafts of these documents to Defense Counsel prior to filing the Motion for Final Approval. Class Counsel and Defense Counsel will expeditiously meet and confer in person or by telephone, and in good faith, to resolve any disagreements concerning the Motion for Final Approval.

10.1 **Response to Objections.** Each Party retains the right to respond to any objection raised by a Participating Class Member, including the right to file responsive documents in Court no later than five (5) court days prior to the Final Approval Hearing, or as otherwise ordered or accepted by the Court.

10.2 **Duty to Cooperate.** If the Court does not grant Final Approval or conditions Final Approval on any material change to the Settlement (including, but not limited to, the scope of release to be granted by Class Members), the Parties will expeditiously work together in good

1 faith to address the Court's concerns by revising the Agreement as necessary to obtain Final
2 Approval. The Court's decision to award less than the amounts requested for the Class
3 Representative Service Payment, Class Counsel Fees Payment, Class Counsel Litigation
4 Expenses Payment, and/or Administrator Costs Payment shall not constitute a material
5 modification to the Agreement within the meaning of this paragraph.

6 10.3 Continuing Jurisdiction of the Court. The Parties agree that, after entry of Judgment, the
7 Court will retain jurisdiction over the Parties, the Action, and the Settlement solely for purposes
8 of (i) enforcing this Agreement and/or Judgment, (ii) addressing settlement administration
9 matters, and (iii) addressing such post-Judgment matters as are permitted by law.

10 10.4 Waiver of Right to Appeal. Provided the Judgment is consistent with the terms and
11 conditions of this Agreement, specifically including the Class Counsel Fees Payment and Class
12 Counsel Litigation Expenses Payment as set forth in this Settlement, the Parties, their respective
13 counsel, and all Participating Class Members who did not object to the Settlement as provided in
14 this Agreement, waive all rights to appeal from the Judgment, including all rights to post-
15 judgment and appellate proceedings, the right to file motions to vacate judgment, motions for new
16 trial, extraordinary writs, and appeals. The waiver of appeal does not include any waiver of the
17 right to oppose such motions, writs or appeals. If an objector appeals the Judgment, the Parties'
18 obligations to perform under this Agreement will be suspended until such time as the appeal is
19 finally resolved and the Judgment becomes final, except as to matters that do not affect the amount
20 of the Net Settlement Amount.

21 10.5 Appellate Court Orders to Vacate, Reverse, or Materially Modify Judgment. If the
22 reviewing Court vacates, reverses, or modifies the Judgment in a manner that requires a material
23 modification of this Agreement (including, but not limited to, the scope of release to be granted
24 by Class Members), this Agreement shall be null and void. The Parties shall nevertheless
25 expeditiously work together in good faith to address the appellate court's concerns and to obtain
26 Final Approval and Entry of Judgment, sharing, on a 50-50 basis, any additional Administration
27 Costs reasonably incurred after remittitur. An appellate decision to vacate, reverse, or modify the
28 Court's award of the Class Representative Service Payment or any payments to Class Counsel

shall not constitute a material modification of the Judgment within the meaning of this paragraph, as long as the Gross Settlement Amount remains unchanged.

11. **AMENDED JUDGMENT.** If any amended judgment is required under Code of Civil Procedure §384, the Parties will work together in good faith to jointly submit a proposed amended judgment.

12. **ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS.**

12.1 No Admission of Liability, Class Certification or Representative Manageability for Other Purposes. This Agreement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. Nothing in this Agreement is intended or should be construed as an admission by Defendant that any of the allegations in the Operative Complaint has merit or that Defendant has any liability for any claims asserted; nor should it be intended or construed as an admission by Plaintiffs that Defendant's defenses in the Action have merit. The Parties agree that class certification and representative treatment is for purposes of this Settlement only. If, for any reason, the Court does grant Preliminary Approval, Final Approval, or enter Judgment, Defendant reserves the right to contest certification of any class for any reason, Defendant reserves all available defenses to the claims in the Action, and Plaintiffs reserve the right to move for class certification on any grounds available and to contest Defendant's defenses. The Settlement, this Agreement and Parties' willingness to settle the Action will have no bearing on, and will not be admissible in connection with, any litigation (except for proceedings to enforce or effectuate the Settlement and this Agreement).

12.2 Confidentiality Prior to Preliminary Approval. Plaintiff, Class Counsel, Defendant, and Defense Counsel separately agree that, until the Motion for Preliminary Approval of Settlement is filed, they and each of them will not disclose, disseminate and/or publicize, or cause or permit another person to disclose, disseminate or publicize, any of the terms of the Agreement directly or indirectly, specifically or generally, to any person, corporation, association, government agency, or other entity except: (1) to the Parties' attorneys, accountants, or spouses, all of whom will be instructed to keep this Agreement confidential; (2) counsel in a related matter; (3) to the extent necessary to report income to appropriate taxing authorities; (4) in response to a court order

1 or subpoena; or (5) in response to an inquiry or subpoena issued by a state or federal government
2 agency. Each Party agrees to immediately notify the other Party of any judicial or agency order,
3 inquiry, or subpoena seeking such information. Plaintiffs, Class Counsel, Defendant, and Defense
4 Counsel separately agree not to, directly or indirectly, initiate any conversation or other
5 communication, before the filing of the Motion for Preliminary Approval, with any third party
6 regarding this Agreement or the matters giving rise to this Agreement except to respond only that
7 “the matter was resolved,” or words to that effect. This paragraph does not restrict Class Counsel’s
8 communications with Class Members in accordance with Class Counsel’s ethical obligations
9 owed to Class Members.

10 12.3 No Solicitation. The Parties separately agree that they and their respective counsel and
11 employees will not solicit any Class Member to opt out of or object to the Settlement, or appeal
12 from the Judgment. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to restrict Class Counsel’s ability
13 to communicate with Class Members in accordance with Defense Counsel’s and Class Counsel’s
14 ethical obligations and Class Counsel’s fiduciary duties owed to Class Members.

15 12.4 Integrated Agreement. Upon execution by all Parties and their counsel, this Agreement
16 together with its attached exhibits shall constitute the entire agreement between the Parties
17 relating to the Settlement, superseding any and all oral representations, warranties, covenants, or
18 inducements made to or by any Party.

19 12.5 Attorney Authorization. Class Counsel and Defense Counsel separately warrant and
20 represent that they are authorized by Plaintiffs and Defendant, respectively, to take all appropriate
21 action required or permitted to be taken by such Parties pursuant to this Agreement to effectuate
22 its terms, and to execute any other documents reasonably required to effectuate the terms of this
23 Agreement including any amendments to this Agreement.

24 12.6 Cooperation. The Parties and their counsel will cooperate with each other and use their
25 best efforts, in good faith, to implement the Settlement by, among other things, modifying the
26 Settlement Agreement, submitting supplemental evidence and supplementing points and
27 authorities as requested by the Court. In the event the Parties are unable to agree upon the form
28 or content of any document necessary to implement the Settlement, or on any modification of the

Agreement that may become necessary to implement the Settlement, the Parties will seek the assistance of a mediator and/or the Court for resolution.

12.7 No Prior Assignments. The Parties separately represent and warrant that they have not directly or indirectly assigned, transferred, encumbered, or purported to assign, transfer, or encumber to any person or entity and portion of any liability, claim, demand, action, cause of action, or right released and discharged by the Party in this Settlement.

12.8 No Tax Advice. Neither Plaintiffs, Class Counsel, Defendant nor Defense Counsel are providing any advice regarding taxes or taxability, nor shall anything in this Settlement be relied upon as such within the meaning of United States Treasury Department Circular 230 (31 CFR Part 10, as amended) or otherwise.

12.9 Modification of Agreement. This Agreement, and all parts of it, may be amended, modified, changed, or waived only by an express written instrument signed by all Parties or their representatives, and approved by the Court.

12.10 Agreement Binding on Successors. This Agreement will be binding upon, and inure to the benefit of, the successors of each of the Parties.

12.11 Applicable Law. All terms and conditions of this Agreement and its exhibits will be governed by and interpreted according to the internal laws of the state of California, without regard to conflict of law principles.

12.12 Cooperation in Drafting. The Parties have cooperated in the drafting and preparation of this Agreement. This Agreement will not be construed against any Party on the basis that the Party was the drafter or participated in the drafting.

12.13 Confidentiality. To the extent permitted by law, all agreements made, and orders entered during Action and in this Agreement relating to the confidentiality of information shall survive the execution of this Agreement.

12.14 Headings. The descriptive heading of any section or paragraph of this Agreement is inserted for convenience of reference only and does not constitute a part of this Agreement.

12.15 Calendar Days. Unless otherwise noted, all reference to “days” in this Agreement shall be to calendar days. In the event any date or deadline set forth in this Agreement falls on a

weekend or federal legal holiday, such date or deadline shall be on the first business day thereafter.

12.16 Notice. All notices, demands, or other communications between the Parties in connection with this Agreement will be in writing and deemed to have been duly given as of the third business day after mailing by United States mail, or the day sent by email or messenger, addressed as follows:

To Plaintiffs:

John G. Yslas
john.yslas@wilshirelawfirm.com
Diego Aviles
diego.aviles@wilshirelawfirm.com
Harry Erganyan
harry.erganyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
Mariam Nazaretyan
mariam.nazaretyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
WILSHIRE LAW FIRM
660 S. Figueroa St., Sky Lobby
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: (213) 381-9988
Facsimile: (213) 381-9989

To Defendant:

Alexander Medina
alex@medinamckelvey.com
Eric Lloyd
eric@medinamckelvey.com
MEDINA McKELVEY LLP
925 Highland Pointe Drive, Suite 300
Roseville, California 95678
Telephone: (916) 960-2211
Facsimile: (916) 742-5488

12.17 Execution in Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts by facsimile, electronically (i.e. DocuSign), or by email which for purposes of this Agreement shall be accepted as an original. All executed counterparts and each of them will be deemed to be one and the same instrument if counsel for the Parties will exchange between themselves signed counterparts. Any executed counterpart will be admissible in evidence to prove the existence and contents of this Agreement.

12.18 Stay of Litigation. The Parties agree that upon the execution of this Agreement the litigation shall be stayed, except to effectuate the terms of this Agreement. The Parties further agree that upon the signing of this Agreement pursuant to CCP section 583.330 to extend the date to bring a case to trial under CCP section 583.310 for the entire period of this settlement process.

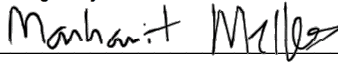
12.19 Binding Agreement. The Parties intend that this Agreement shall be fully enforceable and binding upon all Parties within the provisions of Cal. Civil Proc. § 664.6, and that it shall be admissible and subject to disclosure in any proceeding to enforce its terms pursuant to Cal. Evid. Code §§ 1122(a)(1) and 1123(b), notwithstanding the confidentiality provisions that otherwise might apply under federal or state law. The Parties further agree and intend that the Alameda County Superior Court may enforce this Agreement pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 664.6. If an action or proceeding is brought to enforce this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to their reasonable attorneys' fees and costs.

IT IS SO AGREED.

By the Parties:

DATED: 9/14/2026

Signed by:

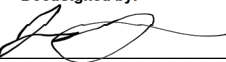


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Plaintiff Marhawit Melles

DATED: 9/14/2026

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Plaintiff John Rodrigues

DATED: 9/15/2026

Signed by:



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Defendant Horizon Services, Incorporated

By: Jaime Campos

Position: CEO

1 Approved by counsel as to form:

2 DATED: 9/14/2026

WILSHIRE LAW FIRM

3
4
5 By: 

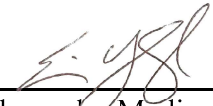
John G. Yslas

Diego Aviles

6
7 Counsel for Plaintiffs Marhawit Melles and John
Rodrigues

8 DATED: September 15, 2026

MEDINA McKELVEY LLP

9
10
11 By: 

Alexander Medina

Eric Lloyd

12
13 Counsel for Defendant Horizon Services, Incorporated

EXHIBIT A

**COURT APPROVED NOTICE OF CLASS ACTION AND PAGA SETTLEMENT AND
HEARING DATE FOR FINAL COURT APPROVAL**

Melles, et al. v. Horizon Services, Incorporated
Case No. 23CV046524 (Alameda County Superior Court)

***The Alameda County Superior Court authorized this notice.
It is not junk mail, spam, an advertisement, or solicitation by a lawyer.
Please read it carefully! You are not being sued.***

You may be eligible to receive money from an employee class and a representative action lawsuit (“Action”) against Horizon Services, Incorporated (“Defendant”) for alleged wage and hour violations. The Action was filed by former employees Marhawit Melles and John Rodrigues (“Plaintiffs”), and seeks payment of back wages and other relief for a class of all persons currently or formerly employed by Defendant as hourly-paid, non-exempt employees in the State of California (“Class Members”) who worked for Defendant during the Class Period (April 9, 2019, through February 7, 2026); and (2) penalties under the California Private Attorney General Act (“PAGA”) for all Class Members who worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period (January 11, 2023, through February 7, 2026) (“Aggrieved Employees”)

The proposed Settlement has two main parts: (1) a Class settlement requiring Defendant to fund Individual Class Payments, and (2) a PAGA settlement requiring Defendant to fund Individual PAGA Payments and pay PAGA Penalties to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (“LWDA”).

Based on Defendant’s records, and the Parties’ current assumptions, **your Individual Class Payment is estimated to be \$ [REDACTED] (less withholding) and your Individual PAGA Payment is estimated to be \$ [REDACTED]**. The actual amount you may receive likely will be different and will depend on a number of factors. (If no amount is stated for your Individual PAGA Payment, then according to Defendant’s records you are not eligible for an Individual PAGA Payment under the Settlement because you didn’t work during the PAGA Period.)

The above estimates are based on Defendant’s records showing that **you worked [REDACTED] Workweeks during the Class Period and you worked [REDACTED] Pay Periods during the PAGA Period**. If you believe that you worked more during either period, you can submit a challenge by the deadline date.

The Court has already preliminarily approved the proposed Settlement and approved this Notice. The Court has not yet decided whether to grant final approval of the Settlement. Your legal rights are affected whether you act or not act. READ THIS NOTICE CAREFULLY. You will be deemed to have read and understood it. At the Final Approval Hearing, the Court will decide whether to finally approve the Settlement and how much of the Settlement will be paid to Plaintiff and Plaintiff’s attorneys (“Class Counsel”). The Court will also decide whether to enter a judgment that requires Defendant to make payments under the Settlement and requires Class Members and Aggrieved Employees to give up their rights to assert certain claims against Defendant.

YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AND OPTIONS IN THIS SETTLEMENT	
DO NOTHING	Receive money. Give up rights to sue Defendant for claims released in the Settlement.
EXCLUDE YOURSELF	Receive no money from the Class settlement. You will retain the right to pursue your own legal claims against Defendant. However, even if you exclude yourself from the Class settlement, you will still receive a portion of the PAGA settlement and be bound by it if you worked during the PAGA Period.
OBJECT	Write to the Court about why you object to the Settlement. If the Settlement receives Final Approval, you will receive money and give up rights to sue Defendant for claims released in the Settlement.
CHALLENGE YOUR NUMBER OF WORKWEEKS AND/OR PAY PERIODS	Challenge your number of Workweeks or Pay Periods listed in this Notice and provide supporting evidence. If you challenge your workweeks or pay periods, you will still be part of the Settlement and will give up rights to sue Defendant for claims released in the Settlement.

BASIC INFORMATION

1. WHY AM I RECEIVING THIS NOTICE?

Defendant's records indicate that you worked for Defendant at some point(s) between April 9, 2019, through February 7, 2026, and are therefore a member of the Class for purposes of this Settlement.

You received this Notice because you have a right to know about a proposed Settlement of the Action, and about all of your options, before the Court decides whether to finally approve the Settlement. The Settlement will resolve all Class Members' claims, which are described below, during the Class Period. The Settlement will also resolve claims for civil penalties brought under the California Private Attorneys' General Act ("PAGA"). If you are a Class Member, you may also an "Aggrieved Employee" if you worked for Defendant during the "PAGA Period," which is January 11, 2023, through February 7, 2026.

If the Court grants Final Approval to the Settlement, a settlement Administrator appointed by the Court will issue the payments provided for by the Settlement to Class Members. You are encouraged to always keep your address up to date with the Administrator (the Administrator's contact information can be found in Section 12, below).

This Notice package explains the allegations and background regarding the lawsuit, the Settlement, your legal rights, what benefits are available, who is eligible for them, and how to receive those benefits.

The Court in charge of the Action is the Alameda County Superior Court, and the case is titled *Melles, et al. v. Horizon Services, Incorporated*, Case No. 23CV046524. The persons who sued, Marhawit Melles and John Rodrigues, are the Plaintiffs, and the company sued, Horizon Services, Incorporated, is the Defendant.

2. WHAT IS THE LAWSUIT ABOUT?

The Plaintiffs in the lawsuit allege wage and hour violations against Defendant for: (1) Failure to Pay Minimum and Straight Time Wages; (2) Failure to Pay Overtime Wages; (3) Failure to Provide Meal Periods; (4) Failure to Authorize and Permit Rest Periods; (5) Failure to Timely Pay Final Wages at Termination; (6) Failure to Provide Accurate Itemized Wage Statements; (7) Failure to Indemnify Employees for Expenditures; (8) Failure to Produce Requested Employment Records; and (9) Unfair Business Practices. In addition, Plaintiffs are seeking to recover civil penalties pursuant to PAGA (“PAGA Penalties”) based on the alleged violations of the California Labor Code listed above. Defendant denies Plaintiffs’ claims and denies any wrongdoing.

3. WHY IS THIS A CLASS ACTION?

In an employment class action, one or more people called “Class Representatives” (in this case, the Plaintiffs) sue on behalf of all workers who they contend have similar claims. All of these workers are a Class or Class Members. Bringing one lawsuit, as opposed to many small ones, saves money, time and court resources. The court resolves the issues for all Class Members, except for those who exclude themselves from the Class.

4. WHY IS THERE A SETTLEMENT?

The Court has not decided in favor of the Plaintiffs or Defendant on the merits of the claims alleged in the lawsuit. Plaintiffs believe they would win at trial. Defendant thinks that Plaintiffs’ lawsuit would not proceed to a trial and/or that Plaintiffs would not win at trial. However, there has been no trial. Instead, in acknowledgment of the risk that both Parties face should the case proceed, the Parties have agreed to a negotiated settlement. This way, all Parties avoid the cost of preparing for and conducting a trial, the risk of losing the right to a trial, and the workers affected by the alleged violations receive compensation. The Settlement represents a compromise and settlement of highly disputed claims. The Plaintiffs, as well as Plaintiffs’ lawyers (called “Class Counsel”), believes the Settlement is fair and reasonable and in the best interests of all Class Members.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE SETTLEMENT?

5. WHO IS INCLUDED IN THE SETTLEMENT?

If you received this Notice, you are a Class Member for settlement purposes. The Class includes: All employees of Defendant who were classified as non-exempt, hourly paid employees who worked within the State of California at any time from April 9, 2019, through February 7, 2026.

6. ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS TO BEING INCLUDED?

You are not a Class Member if you already have resolved the claims asserted in this lawsuit, whether by settlement or a separate legal proceeding (i.e., another lawsuit).

THE SETTLEMENT BENEFITS—WHAT YOU GET

7. WHAT DOES THE SETTLEMENT PROVIDE?

Defendant has agreed to pay a Gross Settlement Amount (“GSA”) of \$729,300.00 (Seven Hundred Twenty-Nine Thousand Three Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents) to settle the lawsuit. From the GSA, Class Counsel will apply to the Court for attorneys’ fees of up to one third (1/3) of the GSA (currently \$243,100.00) and up to \$25,000.00 in costs; a Class Representative Service Payment of \$10,000.00 to Plaintiff Marhawit Melles and \$7,500.00 for Plaintiff John Rodrigues (for Plaintiffs’ work and efforts prosecuting this case); a PAGA Penalties payment of \$50,000.00 to resolve the PAGA claims; and Settlement Administration Costs to Apex Class Action Administration, not to exceed \$9,100.00. The exact amount of the Class Counsel’s Fees and Litigation Expenses, Class Representative Service Payments, and Administration Costs will be determined by the Court at the Final Approval hearing. The remaining portion of the Settlement amount, the “Net Settlement Amount” or the “NSA,” is currently estimated to be approximately **\$XXXXXXXX**. The NSA will be apportioned and paid out as Individual Class Payments to the Settlement Class Members, who are the Class Members that do not request to be excluded (“opt out”) of the Settlement.

PAGA Penalties payment: As part of the PAGA portion of the Settlement, the Parties will ask the Court to approve a \$50,000.00 PAGA Penalties payment in settlement of claims for civil penalties under PAGA. As required under PAGA, 75% of the PAGA Penalties payment, or \$37,500.00, will be paid to the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. The remaining 25% of the PAGA Penalties payment, or \$12,500.00, will be distributed to the Aggrieved Employees as Individual PAGA Payments.

8. HOW MUCH WILL MY PAYMENT BE?

An approximation of your Individual Class Payment appears on the first page of this Notice. If you are also an Aggrieved Employee, an approximation of your Individual PAGA Payment will also appear on the first page of this Notice.

Individual Class Payment: Your Individual Class Payment is based on the number Workweeks you worked, as represented in Defendant’s records, in comparison to the total number of Workweeks worked by all Class Members during the Class Period (April 9, 2019, through February 7, 2026). Eighty percent (80%) of each Class Member’s Individual Class Payment will be treated as a payment in settlement of the alleged claims for penalties and interest and will be reported on a Form 1099 by the Settlement Administrator, and twenty percent (20%) of each Class Member’s Individual Class Payment will be treated as a payment in settlement of alleged claims for unpaid wages. The 20% allocated as unpaid wages will be reduced by applicable payroll tax withholdings and deductions and reported on a Form W-2.

Individual PAGA Payment: If you worked for Defendant from January 11, 2023, through February 7, 2026 (“PAGA Period”), you are also an “Aggrieved Employee” and will receive an Individual PAGA Payment in addition to your Individual Class Payment. The Individual PAGA Payments are based on the number of PAGA Pay Periods worked by each Aggrieved Employee in comparison to the total amount of PAGA Pay Periods worked by all Aggrieved Employees during the PAGA Period. One hundred percent (100%) of each Aggrieved Employees’ Individual PAGA Payment will be characterized as penalties and will not be reduced by payroll tax withholdings and deductions. The Individual PAGA Payment will be

reported on a Form 1099 by the Settlement Administrator. An approximation of your anticipated Individual PAGA Payment appears on the first page of this Notice.

For the Class Members who are also Aggrieved Employees, their Individual Class Payment will be combined with their Individual PAGA Payment, and they will receive a single check for the combined payments. If a Class Member chooses to opt-out of the Settlement, they will still receive an Individual PAGA Payment, as Aggrieved Employees cannot opt-out of the PAGA portion of the Settlement under California law.

HOW YOU GET A PAYMENT

9. HOW DO I RECEIVE A PAYMENT?

You do not need to do anything to receive a payment. However, if you believe that the number of Workweeks or PAGA Pay Periods you worked is incorrect, please correct it and provide any supporting evidence to the settlement Administrator, whose contact information is listed in Section 12 below.

10. WHEN WOULD I GET MY PAYMENT?

The Court will hold a Final Fairness Hearing on [REDACTED], to decide whether to approve the Settlement. If the Judge approves the Settlement, and anyone objects, there may be appeals. It is always uncertain when these objections and appeals can be resolved and resolving them can take time. If there is no objection, the Effective Date of the Settlement will be the date of entry of the Court's Order granting final approval.

Following the Effective Date, Individual Class Payments and Individual PAGA Payments will be mailed to Participating Class Members and Aggrieved Employees approximately 30 days after the Court's approval of the Settlement becomes final so long as there are no appeals.

Settlement checks should be cashed promptly upon receipt. Proceeds of checks which remain uncashed after 120 days from the date of issuance will be forwarded to a nonprofit, Legal Aid at Work. If your settlement check is lost or misplaced, you should contact the Settlement Administrator immediately to request a replacement.

For an update on the status of payments, please contact the Settlement Administrator (see Section 12).

11. WHAT AM I GIVING UP TO GET A PAYMENT?

If the Court approves this Settlement and unless you exclude yourself, you will become a Participating Class Member, and that means that you cannot sue, continue to sue, or be part of any other lawsuit against Defendant concerning the legal claims being resolved in this Settlement. Specifically, you will be giving up or "releasing" the Released Class Claims described below against Defendant and all of Defendant's subsidiaries, affiliates, shareholders, members, agents, predecessors, successors, owners, and assigns ("Released Parties"). The releases become effective once the GSA is fully funded by Defendant.

Released Class Claims: The "Released Class Claims" are all claims, rights, demands, liabilities, and causes of action, alleged or which could have reasonably been alleged based on the facts alleged in the operative Complaint, including but not limited to: (1) failure to pay minimum and straight time wages

QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-XXX-XXXX TOLL FREE

(pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 204, 1194, 1194.2, and 1197); (2) failure to pay overtime wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 1194 and 1198); (3) failure to provide meal periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226.7 and 512); (4) failure to authorize and permit rest periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226.7); (5) failure to timely pay final wages at termination (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 201-203); (6) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226); (7) failure to indemnify employees for expenditures (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 2802); (8) failure to produce requested employment records (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226 and 1198.5); and (9) unfair business practices (pursuant to Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, et seq.). The enumeration of these specific claims shall neither enlarge nor narrow the scope of res judicata based on the claims that were asserted in the Action or could have been asserted in the Action based on the facts and circumstances alleged in the Operative Complaint. The Released Class Claims are those that accrued during the Class Period.

Released PAGA Claims: The “Released PAGA Claims” means Plaintiffs, as a proxy or agent of the LWDA, release all claims for PAGA civil penalties that could have been sought by the LWDA for the violations alleged in Plaintiffs’ January 11, 2024 and April 8, 2026 PAGA Notices, including but not limited to: (1) failure to pay for all hours worked, including minimum wages, straight time wages, and overtime wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 204, 510, 1194, 1197 and 1198); (2) failure to provide meal periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 226.7); (3) failure to authorize and permit rest periods (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 226.7); (4) failure to pay all earned wages twice per month (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 204); (5) failure to maintain accurate records of hours worked and meal periods taken or missed (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 1174.5); (6) failure to timely pay final wages at termination (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 201 – 203); (7) failure to provide accurate itemized wage statements (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 226); (8) failure to indemnify employees for expenditures (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 2802); (9) failure to produce requested employment records (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 226, 432, and 1198.5); (10) failure to keep accurate and complete payroll records (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 1174); (11) failures to provide proper sick leave and supplemental paid sick leave (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 245-248.5); (12) refusal to pay wages due and payable and/or denial at times of the validity of any claim to wages due (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 216); (13) secretly paying wages lower than required by statute while purporting to pay legal wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 223); (14) failure to pay vested vacation and/or paid time off (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 227.3); (15) failure to provide suitable seating (pursuant to section 14(A-B) of all applicable IWC Wage Orders); (16) unlawful agreements (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 432.5); (17) failure to timely provide temporary workers with wages (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 201.3); (18) preventing employees from using or disclosing the skills, knowledge and experience they obtained at Defendant, and whistleblower violations (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 98.6, 232, 232.5, 1102.5, and 1197.5); (19) unlawful inquiries into criminal histories (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code § 432.7); and (20) workplace health and safety violations (pursuant to Cal. Labor Code §§ 1527, 3366, 3457, 8397.4, 6401, and 6401). The Released PAGA Claims are those that accrued during the PAGA Period.

EXCLUDING YOURSELF FROM THE SETTLEMENT

12. HOW DO I EXCLUDE MYSELF FROM THE SETTLEMENT?

To exclude yourself from the Settlement, you must send the Settlement Administrator a written and signed request for exclusion which must be postmarked no later than 45 days after Class Notice is Mailed. Be sure to include your name, address, and telephone number, and any other information you think would be helpful to the settlement Administrator to identify you. You can send your request for exclusion to the settlement Administrator at:

QUESTIONS? CALL **1-800-XXX-XXXX** TOLL FREE

Apex Class Action Administration
Melles, et al. v. Horizon Services, Incorporated

XXXXX
City, State, XXXXX
Email:

If you ask to be excluded from the Settlement, you will not be legally bound by anything that happens in the Action, except as it relates to settlement of the PAGA claim. If you ask to be excluded from the Settlement you will not be able to object to the Settlement and you will not receive an Individual Class Payment, but you will still receive an Individual PAGA Payment if you worked for Defendant during the PAGA Period (January 11, 2023, through February 7, 2026). If you ask to be excluded, you may be able to sue (or continue to sue) Defendant in the future.

13. IF I DON'T EXCLUDE MYSELF, CAN I SUE DEFENDANT FOR THE SAME THING LATER?

No. Unless you exclude yourself, you give up any right to sue Defendant for the claims that this Settlement resolves. If you have a pending lawsuit, speak to your lawyer in that case immediately. You must exclude yourself from this Class to continue your own lawsuit. Remember, the exclusion deadline is 45 days after Class Notice is Mailed.

14. IF I EXCLUDE MYSELF, CAN I GET MONEY FROM THIS SETTLEMENT?

No. If you exclude yourself, you will not receive any money from this Settlement. However, if you timely exclude yourself from the Settlement, you will retain the right to pursue your own legal action against Defendant, if you desire.

THE LAWYERS REPRESENTING YOU IN THIS LAWSUIT

15. DO I HAVE A LAWYER IN THIS CASE?

The Court has determined that Wilshire Law Firm is qualified to represent you and the Class Members in the lawsuit. These lawyers are called Class Counsel and their contact information is listed below. If you want to be represented by your own lawyer, you may hire one at your own expense.

John G. Yslas
john.yslas@wilshirelawfirm.com
Diego Aviles
diego.aviles@wilshirelawfirm.com
Harry Erganyan
harry.erganyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
Mariam Nazaretyan
mariam.nazaretyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
WILSHIRE LAW FIRM
660 S. Figueroa St., Sky Lobby
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: (213) 381-9988
Facsimile: (213) 381-9989

QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-XXX-XXXX TOLL FREE

16. HOW WILL THE LAWYERS BE PAID?

Class Counsel will ask the Court to approve up to one third (1/3) of the GSA (currently \$243,100.00) for attorneys' fees incurred in investigating the facts, litigating the case, and negotiating the Settlement. Class Counsel will also seek Court-approval of up to \$25,000.00 in litigation expenses incurred in this matter. The Court may award Class Counsel less than what they request. Class Counsel will also ask the Court to approve payments to Plaintiffs in the amount of \$10,000.00 for Plaintiff Marhawit Melles and \$7,500.00 for Plaintiff John Rodrigues, in addition to Plaintiffs' Individual Class Payment and Individual PAGA Payment for the initiative, risk, and time and energy Plaintiffs have spent in service to the Class as the Class Representative. The Court may award the Class Representative less than what is requested.

OBJECTING TO THE SETTLEMENT

You can and have the right to tell the Court you do not agree with the Settlement or some part of it.

17. HOW DO I TELL THE COURT THAT I OBJECT TO THE SETTLEMENT?

If you don't think the Settlement is fair, you can object to some or all of the Settlement. You can either object to the Settlement in person at the Final Approval Hearing or you can submit a written objection. Written objections and notices of intent to appear at the Final Approval Hearing must be mailed to the Settlement Administrator and postmarked on or before [REDACTED], at the following address:

Apex Class Action Administration
Melles, et al. v. Horizon Services, Incorporated
XXXXXX
City, State, XXXXX
Email:

The written objection should state your name and address and describe all legal and factual reasons that you object to the terms of the Settlement. You should also include or attach any documents upon which your objection is based. If the Court overrules the objection at the Final Approval hearing, the Settlement Agreement will be approved, and you will receive your payment. If you do not submit a written objection, you may still appear at the Final Approval hearing to voice your objection or to otherwise observe the proceedings.

18. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBJECTING AND REQUESTING EXCLUSION?

Objecting is simply telling the Court that you do not agree with something about the Settlement. You can object only if you stay in the Class.

Requesting exclusion is telling the Court that you do not want to be part of the Class. If you exclude yourself, you have no basis to object because the case no longer affects you, and you do not get any money from this Settlement. If you submit both an objection and a request to be excluded from the settlement, the request to be excluded will control and you will not get any money from this settlement.

THE COURT'S FAIRNESS HEARING

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing to decide whether to approve the Settlement. You may attend and you may ask to speak, but you don't have to.

19. WHEN AND WHERE WILL THE COURT DECIDE WHETHER TO APPROVE THE SETTLEMENT?

The Court will hold a Final Approval Hearing at [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] in Department 21 of the Alameda County Superior Court located at 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, California 94612 to determine whether the Settlement should be finally approved as fair, reasonable, and adequate. If there are objections, the Court will consider them at that time. The Court will also be asked to approve the requests for the Class Representative Service Payment and the Class Counsel Fees and Litigation Expenses Payments.

20. DO I HAVE TO COME TO THE HEARING?

No. Class Counsel will answer questions the Court may have. However, you are welcome to attend. If you send an objection, you do not have to come to the Court to talk about it. As long as you mailed your written objection to the settlement administrator on time, the Court will consider it. You may also pay your own lawyer to attend, but it is not necessary.

IF YOU DO NOTHING

21. WHAT IF I DO NOTHING AT ALL?

If you do nothing, you will receive a Settlement payment, and you will be bound by the terms of Settlement, which means that you will not be able to start a lawsuit, continue a lawsuit, or be a part of any other lawsuit against the Defendant about the legal issues in the Action.

GETTING MORE INFORMATION

22. HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

You may contact Class Counsel at the contact information listed above in Section 15 if you have any questions about the Settlement. You may also contact the Court-appointed Settlement Administrator, Apex Class Action Administration, by calling toll free 1-800-[REDACTED], or you can write to the Administrator at the following address:

Apex Class Action Administration
Melles, et al. v. Horizon Services, Incorporated
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
City, State, [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

PLEASE DO NOT TELEPHONE THE COURT OR DEFENDANT'S COUNSEL FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THIS SETTLEMENT OR THE CLAIM PROCESS. YOU MAY,

QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-XXX-XXXX TOLL FREE

HOWEVER, CALL CLASS COUNSEL OR THE SETTLEMENT ADMINISTRATOR, LISTED ABOVE.

QUESTIONS? CALL 1-800-XXX-XXXX TOLL FREE

EXHIBIT 4



Thank you for your Proposed Settlement Submission

From no-reply@formassembly.com <no-reply@formassembly.com>

Date Wed 9/30/2026 11:26 AM

To Theresa Chan <theresa.chan@wilshirelawfirm.com>

09/30/2026 11:25:58 AM

Thank you for your submission to the Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

Item submitted: Proposed Settlement

On 09/30/2026 11:25:58 AM your Proposed Settlement was successfully processed for case number LWDA-CM-1004504-24

If you have questions or concerns regarding this submission or your case, please send an email to pagainfo@dir.ca.gov.

DIR PAGA Unit on behalf of
Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Website: [https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Flabor.ca.gov%2FPrivate Attorneys General Act.htm&data=05%7C02%7Ctheresa.chan%40wilshirelawfirm.com%7C993ec8e752b545e7b33308df1f204e57%7C9ada260a4f194da187b814d372333753%7C1%7C0%7C639263895844599839%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRy.dWUslIYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoitWFpbCIsIldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=BI8ITMfbczj1eaiENJY%2Fvt3erdZAhpLzfNa1Xc7auAo%3D&reserved=0](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Flabor.ca.gov%2FPrivate%20Attorneys%20General%20Act.htm&data=05%7C02%7Ctheresa.chan%40wilshirelawfirm.com%7C993ec8e752b545e7b33308df1f204e57%7C9ada260a4f194da187b814d372333753%7C1%7C0%7C639263895844599839%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRy.dWUslIYiOilwLjAuMDAwMCIslIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoitWFpbCIsIldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=BI8ITMfbczj1eaiENJY%2Fvt3erdZAhpLzfNa1Xc7auAo%3D&reserved=0)

EXHIBIT 5

**Quotation Request:**

Mariam Nazaretyan
Wilshire Law Firm, PLC
mariam.nazaretyan@wilshirelawfirm.com
213.381.9988

Case Name:

Date:
RFP Number:

Horizon Services (Melles)

Friday, July 10, 2026
45412041

Prepared By:

Nick Day
Apex Class Action LLC
nickday@apexclassaction.com
949.563.6650

Settlement Specifications

Estimated Class Size:	614
Certified Language Translation:	No
Static Settlement Website:	Yes
Percentage of Undeliverable Mail:	20%

Professional Services	Fee Calculation	Rate(s)	Quantity	Estimated Cost
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Data Analytics and Standardization

Import and Standardize Data*	Per Hour	\$125.00	2	\$250.00
Data Analyst	Per Hour	\$150.00	2	\$300.00

*Data provided must be in a workable format. Apex can standardize provided data at an additional cost of \$150/hr.

Sub Total: \$550.00

Mailing of Class Notice

Form Set Up	Per Hour	\$120.00	1	\$120.00
Print & Mail Class Notice	Per Piece	\$1.50	614	\$921.00
USPS First Class Postage	Per Piece	\$0.78	614	\$478.92
Remail Undeliverable Mail (Skip-Trace)	Per Piece	\$2.25	123	\$276.30
Receive and Process Undeliverable Mail	Per Hour	\$75.00	1	\$75.00
Process Class Member Correspondence via mail, e-mail & fax	Per Piece	\$75.00	2	\$150.00
NCOA Address Update (USPS)	Static Rate	\$122.80	1	\$122.80

Sub Total: \$2,144.02

Project Management

Project Management	Per Hour	\$150.00	2	\$300.00
Project Coordinator	Per Hour	\$90.00	2	\$180.00
Data Analyst and Reporting	Per Hour	\$140.00	1	\$140.00

Sub Total: \$620.00



APEX

CLASS ACTION ADMINISTRATION

Professional Services	Fee Calculation	Rate(s)	Quantity	Estimated Cost
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Toll-Free Contact Center, Website & Reporting				
Bilingual Toll-Free Contact Center	Static Rate	\$175.00	1	\$175.00
Settlement Status Reports	Static Rate	\$750.00	1	Waived
Sub Total:				\$675.00

Distribution & Settlement Fund Management				
Settlement Calculations (Preliminary and Final)	Per Hour	\$120.00	3	\$360.00
Account Management and Reconciliation	Per Hour	\$140.00	3	\$420.00
Print & Mail Distribution Settlement Check (W-2/1099)	Per Piece	\$1.50	614	\$921.00
USPS First Class Postage	Per Piece	\$0.78	614	\$478.92
Remail Distribution to Updated Address (Skip Trace)	Per Piece	\$2.25	61	\$138.15
Individual Income Tax Preparation & Reporting	Per Hour	\$100.00	4	\$400.00
QSF Income Tax Reporting (per calendar year)	Per Year	\$1,162.91	1	\$1,162.91
Unclaimed Funds: State Controller's Unclaimed Property Fund	Static Rate	\$500.00	1	\$500.00
Sub Total:				\$4,380.98

Post Distribution Reconciliation				
Bank Account Reconciliation	Per Hour	\$135.00	2	\$270.00
Project Management Reconciliation	Per Hour	\$100.00	1	\$100.00
Declarations	Per Hour	\$120.00	3	\$360.00
Sub Total:				\$730.00

WILL NOT EXCEED:				\$9,100.00
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Thank you for your business!



Terms & Conditions

The following Terms and Conditions govern the provision of all services to be provided by Apex Class Action and its affiliates ("Apex") to the Client. These terms and conditions are binding and shall apply to all services provided by Apex in relation to any related services or products.

1. **Services:** Apex commits to providing the Client with the administrative services detailed in the attached Proposal (the "Services").

2. **Payment Terms:** As compensation for the legal services to be provided, the Client agrees to pay Apex all fees detailed in the Proposal. The fees quoted in the Proposal (and any subsequent proposals for additional services) are estimates based on the information provided to Apex by the Client. Apex makes no representation that the estimated fees in the Proposal or any subsequent proposals for additional services shall equal the actual fees charged by Apex to the Client, which fees (including individual line items) may be greater or less than estimated. If additional services are requested on an hourly basis and are not specifically detailed in the Proposal, Apex will prepare estimates for such services subject to approval by the Client. In the performance of such additional services, Apex will charge standard hourly fees which shall apply.

3. **Incurred Expenses:** In relation to the provision of services outlined in this agreement, the Client agrees to reimburse Apex for all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred. Such expenses may include, but are not limited to, costs associated with postage, media production or publication, banking fees, brokerage fees, messenger and delivery service expenses, travel expenses, filing fees, office supplies, meals, staff overtime expenses, and other related costs and expenses. If not otherwise specified in writing, fees for print notice and certain expenses, such as media publication and postage, must be paid immediately upon invoicing and, in certain cases, at least ten (10) days prior to the date on which such expenses will be incurred.

4. **Invoicing:** Apex shall present invoices for its fees and expenses on a monthly basis, except as provided in Section 3. The Client agrees to pay each invoice within 30 days of receipt. In case of non-payment within 90 days of the billing date, an additional service charge of 1.5% per month may apply. Apex reserves the right to increase its prices, charges, and rates annually, subject to reasonable adjustments. If any price increases exceed 10%, Apex shall give thirty (30) days' notice to the Client. In the event of any unpaid invoices beyond 120 days of the due date, Apex reserves the right to withhold services and reports until payment is received, subject to notice to the Client. It is important to note that Apex's failure to provide services and reports in such instances shall not constitute a default under this agreement.

5. **Case Duration:** The duration of these Terms and Conditions, except for the data storage obligations stated in Section 13, shall be in effect until 30 days following the completion of the Services as described in the Proposal. The parties may extend these Terms and Conditions in writing for a mutually agreed-upon period beyond this initial 30-day period.

6. **Termination of Services:** Either party may terminate the Services by providing thirty (30) days written notice to the other party. Alternatively, termination may occur immediately upon written notice for Cause, as defined below. Cause means (i) Apex's gross negligence or willful misconduct that causes serious and material harm to the Client; (ii) the Client's failure to pay Apex invoices for more than one hundred twenty (120) days from the date of the invoice; or (iii) the accrual of invoices or unpaid services where Apex reasonably believes it will not be paid. Termination of the Services shall not relieve the Client of its obligation to pay Apex for services rendered prior to the termination.

7. **Independent Contractor:** As an independent contractor, Apex will provide services under the terms of this agreement. It is agreed that neither Apex nor any of its employees will be considered an employee of the Client. Consequently, Apex and its employees will not be eligible for any benefits provided by the Client to its employees. The Client will not make any tax deductions from the payments due to Apex for state or federal tax purposes. Apex will be solely responsible for paying all taxes and other payments due on payments received from the Client under this agreement.

8. **Apex warrants** that the Services outlined in the Proposal will be performed in accordance with the standards generally adhered to by professionals providing similar services. It is acknowledged that the Services may entail the likelihood of some human and machine errors, omissions, delays, and losses that may result in damage. However, Apex shall not be held liable for such errors, omissions, delays, or losses unless they are caused by its gross negligence or willful misconduct. In the event of any breach of this warranty by Apex, the Client's sole remedy will be limited to Apex's rerunning, at its expense, any inaccurate output provided that such inaccuracies occurred solely as a result of Apex's gross negligence or willful misconduct under this agreement.

9. **Limitation of Liability:** The Client acknowledges that Apex shall not be held liable for any consequential, special, or incidental damages incurred by the Client in relation to the performance of Services, whether the claim is based on breach of warranty, contract, tort (including negligence), strict liability, or any other grounds. Under no circumstances shall Apex's liability to the Client, for any Losses (including court costs and reasonable attorney's fees), arising out of or in connection with these Terms and Conditions, exceed the total amount charged or chargeable to the Client for the specific service(s) that caused the Losses.

10. **Indemnification:** The Client agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Apex from any losses, suits, actions, judgments, fines, costs, liabilities, or claims arising from any action or proceeding relating to the Services provided by Apex, regardless of whether or not it results in liability (collectively referred to as "Indemnified Claims"). However, this indemnification provision shall not apply to the extent that such Indemnified Claims are caused by Apex's willful misconduct, gross negligence, or breach of these Terms and Conditions. This provision shall survive termination of the Services.

11. **Confidentiality:** Apex will uphold strict confidentiality between Apex and the Client and applies to all non-public records, documents, systems, procedures, processes, software, and other information received by either party in connection with the performance of services under these terms. Both Apex and the Client agree to keep confidential all such non-public information, including any material marked or identified as confidential or proprietary. Any such confidential information shall not be disclosed, provided, disseminated, or otherwise made available to any third party, except as required to fulfill the parties' obligations under these terms. The parties acknowledge that in the event of any request to disclose any confidential information in connection with a legal or administrative proceeding, or otherwise to comply with a legal requirement, prompt notice of such request must be given to the other party to enable that party to seek an appropriate protective order or other remedy or to waive compliance with the relevant provisions of these terms. If the Client seeks a protective order or another remedy, Apex, at the Client's expense, will cooperate with and assist the Client in such efforts. If the Client fails to obtain a protective order or waives compliance with the relevant provisions of these terms, Apex will disclose only that portion of the confidential information that it determines it is required to disclose. This confidentiality provision shall survive termination of the services provided. Both parties acknowledge and agree that any breach of this section may cause irreparable harm to the non-breaching party and that injunctive relief may be necessary to prevent any actual or threatened breach. The terms set forth between the parties supersede all prior negotiations, understandings, and agreements between the parties concerning confidentiality. These terms may only be amended in writing and signed by both parties.

12. **Ownership** of the programs, system data, and materials provided by Apex to the Client during the course of providing services herein shall solely belong to Apex. It is acknowledged that fees and expenses paid by the Client do not confer any rights in such property. It is also understood that the said property is made available to the Client solely for the purpose of using it during and in connection with the services provided by Apex.

13. Upon the completion of the administration and unless retention instructions are ordered by the court, Apex will notify the client that it will destroy and/or return all confidential information and property within 90 days upon the client's written request. Alternatively, the material may be stored for one year at a monthly fee of \$1.50 per storage box for paper documents and \$0.01 per image for electronic copies over a period of three years, which compensates Apex for its electronic and hard-copy storage costs. Apex will not be liable for any damages, liability, or expenses incurred in connection with any delay in delivery of, or damage to disks, magnetic tapes, or any input data provided by the client or its representatives unless Apex has agreed in writing to assume such responsibility.

14. **COMPLETE AGREEMENT.** These Terms and Conditions, along with the attached Proposal, represent the complete agreement and understanding between the parties and override any prior agreements (whether written or oral) between Apex and the Client regarding the subject matter. Any modification to these Terms and Conditions may only be made in writing and must be signed by both Apex and the Client. The headings in this document are included for convenience only and do not alter or restrict any provisions in these Terms and Conditions. They may not be used in the interpretation of these Terms and Conditions.

15. This provision outlines the requirements for providing notice or other communication under this agreement. All such communications must be in writing and can be delivered either by personal delivery or through U.S. Mail with prepaid postage or overnight courier. Once delivered personally or sent through the mail, the notice will be considered given after five (5) days from the deposit date in the U.S. Mail. Alternatively, if sent through an overnight courier, the notice will be considered given one business day after delivery to the such courier. It's important to note that the notice must be provided to a responsible officer or principal of the Client or Apex, depending on the case.

16. **Force Majeure:** In the event of any failure or delay in performance due to circumstances beyond Apex's control, including but not limited to strikes, lockouts, fires, floods, acts of God or public enemy, riots, civil disorders, insurrections, war or war conditions, or interference by civil or military authorities, Apex shall not be held liable for any resulting loss or damage. The time for performance under this agreement shall be extended for a period equal to the duration of the disabling cause and a reasonable time thereafter. This provision shall constitute a force majeure clause and shall be construed accordingly.

17. The applicable state and federal laws shall govern the interpretation and enforcement of these Terms and Conditions. No choice of law or conflict of laws provisions shall affect this governing law provision.

18. **Severability:** This applies to all clauses and covenants contained within these Terms and Conditions. In the event that any clause or covenant is deemed invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain valid and enforceable to the fullest extent permissible by law. The validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions shall in no way be affected or impaired by the invalidity, illegality, or unenforceability of any provision deemed so.

19. **Nonwaiver:** This applies to these Terms and Conditions. This means that any failure by one party to enforce a provision of these terms on one or more occasions shall not be construed as a waiver of that provision. In other words, any failure to enforce a provision does not give up the right to enforce it in the future. All provisions of these Terms and Conditions remain in full force and effect, regardless of any prior failure to enforce them.